



FIGHT THE BITE ! WINNEBAGO COUNTY

What is Mosquito-borne illness?

Mosquito-borne illness is an illness spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. In the upper Midwest it is usually caused by viruses such as West Nile, St. Louis or LaCrosse. Most people bitten by infected mosquitoes experience no illness or only mild illness, but a small number of people can develop more serious health problems. It is important to follow precautions outlined in this flyer.

How is it spread?

Mosquito-borne illness is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus from biting infected birds. These mosquitoes then can transmit the West Nile Virus (WNV) to humans and to other birds and animals. People **cannot** get the virus from another person or directly from an infected bird.

Is it in Winnebago County?

Outbreaks of WNV have occurred in Winnebago County since 2001. It has become an endemic in the United States and cases can be expected to occur yearly throughout the virus transmission season.

Am I at risk of becoming sick from a mosquito?

The time of year when mosquitoes are most active and most likely to carry the disease is between late July and late September, but if the weather remains warm, the risk period can extend as late as November. People at higher risk for developing serious symptoms from WNV are those over age 50, or those with compromised immune systems.

What should I do if I get bitten by a mosquito?

Mosquito-borne illness is very rare in Northern Illinois. Most mosquitoes don't carry the viruses that cause human illness, and the risk of illness following a mosquito bite is small. However, you should see your doctor immediately if you develop a fever, weakness, nausea, vomiting, headache, eye pain (sensitivity to light), stiff neck, muscle aches or changes in mental status.

What should I do if I find a dead bird?

TO REPORT THE LOCATION OF A DEAD BIRD:

Call the Winnebago County Health Department **Report Line (815) 720-4245** or visit the On-Line Dead Bird Reporting System on our website at **www.wchd.org**. Expired birds that are reported along with our mosquito surveillance helps to identify areas where WNV transmission potential is the highest.

- **TO DISPOSE OF A DEAD BIRD** Please avoid touching the dead bird with your bare hands! Use a shovel or work gloves to double-bag it and put it out with the trash.

The department has also opened a WNV **Information Line at (815) 720-4240** so that residents can listen to updated information about WNV activity in Winnebago County.





How Can I Fight the Bite?



Follow these steps to prevent mosquito bites:

Although mosquitoes can bite at any time of day, try to limit time outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active (or use precautions as follows).

If you are outdoors consider these options:

- For adults, use mosquito repellent containing 25 to 35% DEET when it is necessary to be outdoors, applied sparingly to exposed skin or clothing, as indicated on the repellent label.
- For children use repellents containing 10% or less of DEET. Do not let children apply repellent to themselves. Do not apply DEET to infants.
- Wash off areas of bare skin where DEET was applied when returning indoors.
- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeved shirt, long pants and socks.

Make sure window and door screens don't have holes in them. Screens in good repair will help prevent mosquitoes from getting inside your house.

Follow these steps to prevent mosquitoes from breeding:

Mosquitoes need water to breed. They can develop into adults in a little as a week. Make sure that items like these below don't collect water, or that you clean them out once a week.

Containers – Turn over or cover unused flower pots, buckets, garbage cans, and wheelbarrows.

Gutters – Remove leaves and other debris that can clog gutters and trap water.

Pools – Cover unused swimming pools and turn over kiddie pools when not in use. Be sure to keep swimming pool covers clear of leaves and water.

Old Tires – Cover or dispose of them. They are one of the mosquitoes' favorite places to breed.



For more information on West Nile Virus or other Arboviruses, call the Winnebago Co. Health Dept. Information Line at 720-4240 or visit www.wchd.org or idph.state.il.us or www.cdc.gov