

To protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites:

- When going outside, use insect repellants that contain DEET. Always read the entire label carefully before using. Directions vary by age. Do not use personal insect repellants containing DEET on children under 6 months of age.
- Limit your time outdoors at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts, pants, socks and a hat when mosquitoes are active. Mosquitoes are less attracted to light coloured clothing.
- Make sure that your door and window screens fit tightly and have no holes. Don't leave unscreened doors and windows open.

For more information

To learn more about West Nile virus, visit the Department of Health and Wellness website at www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/wnv.asp, or contact your local Public Health Services office:

Amherst.....	667-3319 or 1-800-767-3319
Antigonish.....	867-4500 Ext 4800
Bridgewater.....	543-0850
Dartmouth.....	481-5800
New Glasgow.....	752-5151
Sydney.....	563-2400
Truro.....	893-5820
Wolfville.....	542-6310
Yarmouth.....	742-7141

For information related to pesticides or mosquito habitat, call the Department of Environment at 1-877-9-ENVIRO.

For information on blood and West Nile virus visit the Canadian Blood Services website at www.BloodServices.ca.

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West Nile Virus



What is West Nile virus (WNV) infection?

West Nile virus infection is caused by a virus. It is spread by mosquitoes that have fed on the blood of infected birds.

What are the symptoms of a West Nile virus infection?

Most people infected with the virus have no symptoms at all, or only mild symptoms that can begin three to 14 days following a bite from a mosquito that carries the virus. These symptoms can include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, joint pain, swollen glands and rash. A few people infected with the virus will develop serious health problems including meningitis and/or encephalitis.

Who is most likely to get sick after being infected with West Nile virus?

People with weaker immune systems and people with chronic diseases are at greater risk for serious health effects such as meningitis or encephalitis. While the risk of serious illness increases with age, it is important for people of all ages to avoid mosquito bites if the virus is active in your area.

How is West Nile virus spread?

The virus is spread to humans by the bite of a mosquito that carries the West Nile virus. It may also be transmitted through blood transfusions and organ/tissue transplants. The risk of getting West Nile virus through blood transfusions and organ/tissue transplants is considered to be very low. There is no evidence that an individual can get the virus from an infected person.

What are the chances that I could become infected?

It is important to remember that the risks of being bitten by a mosquito that carries the West Nile virus are low and the chances of becoming seriously ill are even lower. However, anyone who is exposed to mosquitoes in an area where West Nile virus infection has been found in dead birds, mosquitoes or horses may be at risk of infection.

Only certain types of mosquitoes can spread West Nile virus infection. In most parts of Canada, including Nova Scotia, the risk of being bitten by a mosquito that carries the virus is greatest from July until early September.

What can I do to protect myself and my family from West Nile virus?

There are steps you can take to protect yourself from the virus. Before West Nile virus activity is found in your area, you can reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home by getting rid of stagnant water — breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Weeds, tall grass, and bushes provide an outdoor home for mosquitoes.

To make your yard less welcoming:

- Regularly drain standing water from pool covers, saucers under flower pots, recycling bins, garbage cans, etc.
- Remove old unused items like tires from your yard, where they have a tendency to collect water.
- Empty wading pools, pet bowls and livestock watering tanks regularly, and change the water in birdbaths twice a week.
- Cover rain barrels with screens.
- Clean out eaves troughs regularly to prevent clogs that can trap water.

