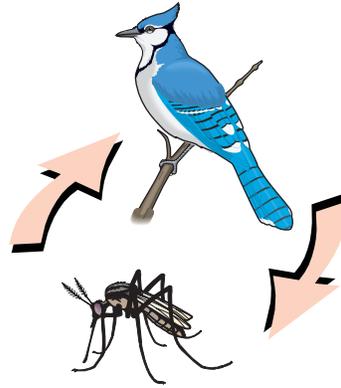


West Nile Virus Mosquito Control FactSheet

HS03-010B (10-05)

Overview

When warmer weather and spring showers arrive also comes the problem of mosquitoes and the potential of West Nile virus transmission. West Nile virus is an arbovirus (short for arthropod-borne virus) that causes encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain. The virus was first identified in 1937 in Uganda, and has since been found in other parts of Africa, Eastern Europe, West Asia, the Middle East, and the United States. The virus also has been identified in most counties in Texas. It is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes that draw the virus from infected birds. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has reported there are many species of birds that could possibly be infected with the virus, but the main culprits are blue jays, crows, and hawks. The virus is *not* transmitted directly from animal to person, person to animal, animal-to-animal, or person-to-person.



The risk of becoming ill from a single mosquito bite is extremely low. Most people infected with the virus are not aware they have contracted it. If a person does become ill, clinical signs are usually mild and include fever, headache, and body aches. People with a more severe case of the illness would also have a high fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, convulsions, and paralysis. Only about one out of 150 people infected with West Nile virus will develop this more severe form of the disease. Rarely, death occurs from exposure to the virus.

The Texas Department of Insurance,
Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI/DWC)
E-mail resourcecenter@tdi.state.tx.us
or call 1-800-687-7080 for more information.

Prevention

There is no human vaccine against the virus; the best prevention is limiting exposure to mosquitoes. The following actions may reduce the risk of mosquito bites and possible exposure to West Nile virus:

- Avoid outdoor activities at dawn, dusk, and early evening when mosquitoes likely to carry the infection are most active.
- If you must be outdoors during time(s) of high mosquito activity, protect yourself by wearing long sleeves, pants, socks, and shoes.
- Use mosquito repellent on exposed skin and spray clothing. Mosquitoes can bite through thin layers of clothing. Choose a repellent that contains N-N-diethyl-m-tolamide DEET as an ingredient and follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Keep doors and windows closed or at least covered with screens in good repair.
- Eliminate any stagnant standing water where mosquitoes are known to breed, (i.e., flower pots, old tires, bird baths, wading pools, etc.).

Testing Wild Birds

Wild birds infected with the virus are most often found dead. If you discover a dead jay, crow, or hawk, wear gloves to pick the bird up and place the bird in a plastic bag and then contact the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). For information on dead bird testing or if you have other questions concerning the West Nile virus, contact the DSHS West Nile virus toll-free line at (888) 883-9997.

Remember that you cannot get the virus from animals, only from mosquitoes.

Additional information, statistics and maps are available by clicking on the West Nile virus information link on the DSHS website at www.dshs.state.tx.us.

Safety Violations Hotline
1-800-452-9595
safetyhotline@tdi.state.tx.us