



West Nile Virus

What You Should Know



How does it spread?

In most cases, an infected mosquito will bite a bird, infecting it with WNV. Other mosquitoes that bite the bird will become infected and go on to infect more birds.

When an infected mosquito bites a person, that person may become infected with WNV. There have been **rare** cases where WNV was transmitted by other methods such as blood transfusion, or transmission from an infected mother to either an unborn baby or a breastfeeding infant, but by far the most common way to become infected is through a mosquito bite.

Who is at risk?

Fewer than 1% of persons bitten by an infected mosquito will develop severe disease; individuals older than 50 years of age are at the greatest risk of developing West Nile Encephalitis, the most serious form of infection.

Can my pets get WNV?

Birds and horses are the only animals that seem to get West Nile disease. Dogs, cats, and other types of livestock are not at risk for the disease.

Can I get WNV from my pets?

No. West Nile Virus cannot be transmitted from infected animals to people or from person to person except in the rare cases mentioned earlier. Almost all cases result from being bitten by an infected mosquito.

For further information, contact the Oklahoma City-County Health Department, Consumer Protection (405) 425-4347, (405) 425-4348, or (405) 425-4319

Learn more at <http://www.occhd.org/fightthebite>

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Is there a vaccine for WNV?

There is currently no vaccine approved for human use. While a vaccine for horses is available through your veterinarian, this vaccine is **not** safe for human use.

Why aren't they spraying?

Many municipalities, rather than spraying to kill adult mosquitoes, are treating the water in ditches and other areas where mosquitoes lay their eggs with chemicals designed to kill immature mosquitoes. These chemicals are known as larvicides. Larvicides are effective because they can be used where the larvae are concentrated, and they are not harmful to other animals or people.

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