

West Nile Virus

Personal Health Fact Sheets

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus (WNV) causes an infection which results in swelling of the brain. In a small percentage of people infected by the virus, the disease can be serious, even fatal.

How is West Nile Virus spread?

WNV is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito becomes infected by biting a bird that carries the virus. Horses bitten by mosquitoes that carry the virus can also become infected. A human or horse that has the disease cannot spread the virus. The risk of getting WNV is highest from late July through September.

What is the treatment?

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. Doctors can treat the symptoms of WNV. Those over 50 years of age are more likely to become ill.

What can we do to prevent West Nile Virus?

The best way to protect yourself is to prevent mosquitoes from biting you.

Reduce mosquito bites by:

- Avoid shaded areas where mosquitoes may be resting.
- Limit evening outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeved shirts and pants.
- Use insect repellents. Insect repellents containing 20% - 30% DEET work best. Follow label directions carefully.
- Do not use repellents on children younger than two years of age.
- To keep mosquitoes out of buildings, maintain window and door screens.
- Mosquito populations can be reduced on your property by eliminating standing water that collects in birdbaths, boats, buckets, tires, unused pools, roof gutters, and other containers.

SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS

Most people show no symptoms or have mild symptoms of the disease.

Mild symptoms:

- fever
- headache
- body aches
- sometimes a skin rash and swollen lymph glands

Serious symptoms:

- headache
- high fever
- stiff neck
- disorientation
- coma
- tremors
- paralysis



DICKINSON-IRON DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT
www.didhd.org

818 Pyle Drive
Kingsford, MI 49802
(906) 774 1868

601 Washington Avenue
Iron River, MI 49935
(906) 265 9913