



Health Yourself Byte



WEST NILE VIRUS

During these warm months when the weather invites you to go outside, keep in mind these safety tips to protect yourself and your family from West Nile virus.

West Nile is a virus that is commonly spread through mosquitos that are infected. If infected symptoms may include fever, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. People who are over 60 years old or people with certain medical conditions (cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease...) are at the greatest risk of developing severe symptoms. However, 70-80% of people infected with the virus will show no symptoms.

How to protect yourself and your family:

- If possible avoid being outside from sunset to sunrise. These are the peak times of day for mosquitos.
- Use insect repellants whenever you are outside. Use repellants that contain DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Wear long sleeves and pants to cover as much skin as possible.
- Use screens on windows and doors to avoid mosquitos entering your home.
- Mosquitos breed in standing water. Frequently empty out flower pots, buckets, pet dishes, birdbaths, and other areas around the house that collect water.
- Symptoms usually appear 2-6 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito, but can range 2-14 days.
- If you think you or a family member might have West Nile virus, go to your healthcare provider for evaluation.



There is not currently any medications to prevent or treat West Nile virus. The use of over-the-counter pain relievers may be used to help reduce fever and pain. Most people with mild symptoms will recover on their own over several weeks. More severe symptoms may require hospitalization to receive more attentive nursing care. To monitor West Nile in your area, check with your state health department or the CDC.