



INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR CLINICIANS

West Nile Virus: Prevention Information and Guidance for Clinicians

- No human vaccine against West Nile virus (WNV) is currently available.
- Education about reducing the risk of infection is important for all persons in transmission areas, but especially in the higher-risk populations (persons more than 50 years old and persons who are immunocompromised).
- The primary prevention step recommended is the use of mosquito repellent when outdoors. Mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing, so spraying clothes with repellent containing permethrin or DEET will give extra protection. These repellents are the most effective and the most studied.
- The more DEET a repellent contains the longer time it can protect from mosquito bites. DEET concentrations higher than 50% do not increase the length of protection.
- Repellents containing permethrin are not approved for direct application on the skin. Repellent containing DEET should not be sprayed on the skin under clothing. For detailed information about using repellents, see "Insect Repellent Use and Safety" (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/insect_repellent.htm).
- Other options include wearing protective clothing (long sleeves, socks, and long pants) when outdoors.
- The primary mosquito-biting hours for many of the species that are important vectors of WNV are from dusk to dawn. It is advisable to either stay indoors during these hours or use protective clothing and repellent.
- Household mosquito-source reduction is also important. Standing water should be removed from outdoor receptacles in the periresidential environment.
- Integrated mosquito management can be another important factor in controlling mosquito populations. (See "Q & A: Pesticides Used in Mosquito Control": www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/pesticides.htm.)

Related Links

- "Prevention and Control" (Section 3 from "Epidemic/Epizootic West Nile Virus in the United States: Guidelines for Surveillance, Prevention, and Control"): www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/resources/wnv-guidelines-aug-2003.pdf
- "Fight the Bite! Avoid Mosquito Bites to Avoid Infection" (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/prevention_info.htm)

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/westnile, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).

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