

Prevent West Nile Virus

The Skokie Health Department would like to remind residents to be cautious and protect against West Nile Virus (WNV). Prevention is the most effective way to protect yourself and your family from becoming infected with WNV. It is found in our community every year. Basic steps should be taken to prevent mosquito breeding around your home to protect you and your family.

The Problem: Mosquitoes transmit serious and sometimes fatal diseases, such as the West Nile Virus, to humans, horses, and pets.

About West Nile Virus: WNV is an infection carried by the Culex mosquito. This mosquito breeds in small pools of standing water. They rest during the day in areas of vegetation such as shrubs or tall grass. They are most active and likely to bite between the hours of dusk and dawn.

About the Illness: Most people infected with WNV have no symptoms of illness and never become ill. But illness can occur 3-15 days after a bite by an infected mosquito. That can cause symptoms of fever, headache and body aches. People over the age of 50 are at a higher risk for serious complications such as encephalitis or meningitis (brain infections). Symptoms of severe disease may last several weeks and the effects on the brain and nervous system may be permanent. For that reason, people who experience high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, severe headaches, or a stiff neck should see a doctor immediately.

Transmission: Mosquitoes become infected with WNV when they feed on infected birds and can then pass the virus to humans and animals while biting. WNV is NOT transmitted from person-to-person. Other possible transmission routes of the virus are being studied. In areas where WNV is circulating, very few mosquitoes are infected. Even if the mosquito is infected there is a very low chance that people who get bitten and become infected will get severely ill. The chances you will become severely ill from one mosquito bite are extremely small.

Reduce Mosquito Breeding Sites From Around Your Home: The carrier of WNV, the Culex mosquito flies only 1-2 miles. Every 7-10 days, a new hatch of mosquitoes can be produced in any area with standing water. Remove standing water to reduce new mosquitos by following these basic steps:

- Remove or throw away old tires, tin cans, buckets, bottles, and other water-holding containers.
- Fill in or drain any low places in the yard, holes in trees, or hollow stumps.
- Keep gutters, drains, and ditches clean so that water will drain properly. Repair leaky pipes and faucets.
- Cover trash containers to keep out rainwater.
- Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths and plant pots at least once a week and stock ornamental ponds with mosquito eating fish or use mosquito larva control products.
- Keep grass short and shrubbery well-trimmed around the house.
- Report mosquito-breeding sites to the Skokie Health Department or the North Shore Mosquito Abatement District at 847-446-9434
- Remember, if it can hold water, it can breed mosquitoes.

Birds: The Skokie Health Department may collect birds for its WNV surveillance program. Birds are very sensitive to WNV and they can indicate the presence of WNV in an area. Birds will be collected and tested for WNV until Skokie receives enough evidence that the WNV is throughout the Village. Once Skokie receives several positive birds for WNV, it may suspend its WNV bird surveillance program. If a sick or injured wild bird or animal is found, contact the Skokie Animal Control at 847-933-8484

Mosquito Treatment Questions: If you have questions about the frequency of mosquito Treatment in your area contact the North Shore Mosquito Abatement District at 847-446-9434

Protect Yourself From Mosquito Bites: Most mosquitoes bite at dusk or at night, but some kinds will bite during the day. Almost all mosquitoes will try to bite you if you enter an area where they are resting.

- When possible, avoid places and times when mosquitoes bite.
- Wear light-colored protective clothing that covers your arms and legs. Tuck the legs of pants into boots or socks and keep collars buttoned.
- Make sure door and window screens fit tightly, and repair any holes.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors and around babies and small children for protection at all times.
- Use mosquito repellents with about 30% DEET (about 10% DEET for children age 2-12) or Picaridin.
- Adults should supervise repellent use by children. Do not use any repellents on children under 2 years of age without consulting your doctor. Apply them to clothes whenever possible and apply sparingly to skin if the label permits. Wash repellent off daily. DO NOT apply over cuts or irritated skin or near the eyes, lips or nose.

More information about West Nile Virus may be found at:

[IDPH West Nile Virus in Illinois](#)

[North Shore Mosquito Abatement District](#)

[CDC West Nile Virus Home Page](#)