

Mosquito Management

P R O G R A M

*Mosquito  
Protection for  
People  
Property  
and Pets*

State of

CONNECTICUT

# How can I protect my family and myself from West Nile Virus?

You can begin by reducing the amount of standing water available for mosquito breeding around your home.

- Dispose of cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property. Do not overlook containers that have become overgrown by vegetation.
- Empty standing water from used or discarded tires that may have accumulated on your property (e.g. tire swings).
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left out of doors. Drainage holes that are located on the sides collect enough water for mosquitoes to breed in.
- Clean clogged roof gutters on an annual basis, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug up the drains. Roof gutters are easily overlooked but can produce millions of mosquitoes each season.
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use. A wading pool becomes a mosquito producer if it is not used on a regular basis.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and do not allow water to stagnate in bird baths. Both provide breeding habitat for domestic mosquitoes. Change water in bird baths and wading pools on a weekly basis.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish. Water gardens are fashionable but become major mosquito producers if they are allowed to stagnate.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used. A swimming pool that is left untended by a family that goes on vacation for a month can produce enough mosquitoes to result in neighborhood-wide complaints. Be aware that mosquitoes may even breed in the water that collects on swimming pool covers.
- Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on your property. Mosquitoes can develop in any puddle that lasts more than 7 to 10 days during the summer.

## Should we stay indoors?

It is not necessary to limit any outdoor activities, unless there is evidence of mosquito-borne disease. However, you can and should try to reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

If West Nile virus is found in your area, you should:

- Minimize time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active. Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials that keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies when outdoors.
- Consider the use of mosquito repellent, according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.

## What measures are being taken to protect the population?

In Connecticut, the state and local governments have implemented an aggressive West Nile virus surveillance and response plan. Restriction of mosquito breeding habitats in each community can greatly lessen the potential for West Nile virus to become a significant human health threat.

## Can pets and livestock get West Nile virus infection?

Yes. Pets and livestock can become infected with West Nile virus (WNV) if bitten by mosquitoes that carry the virus.

## What signs of infection should I look for?

Encephalitis is an infection of the brain. Sick animals may have a fever, weakness, incoordination, muscle spasms and signs of a neurological disease such as change in temperament or seizures.

## What should I do if I suspect my pet has West Nile Virus?

If your animal is sick, contact your veterinarian. The veterinarian will evaluate your animal, provide treatment, and forward samples for laboratory testing to rule out other possible diseases, such as rabies. The Department of Agriculture will assist veterinarians in determining if WNV is the cause once the suspicious neurological disease is reported.



## **Can I catch West Nile virus from animals?**

WNV is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. It is not transmitted directly to people from animals, birds, or other people. However, people who directly handle sick animals should take precautions, such as wearing gloves to protect themselves.

## **Is there a vaccine for pets and livestock for West Nile virus?**

No vaccine currently exists to protect people or animals from WNV infection.

In addition, a surveillance program has been set up to look for West Nile virus in mosquitoes and monitor for bird deaths and suspicious illness in people and horses to identify areas where West Nile virus is present before it becomes a threat to humans.

## **How is West Nile virus infection in animals treated?**

As in people, there are no specific treatments for WNV infection in animals. Treatment is primarily supportive to lessen the severity of the clinical signs.

## **How can I protect pets and livestock from West Nile virus infection?**

You can reduce the risk of West Nile virus infection in animals by minimizing exposure to infected mosquitoes.

## **What measures are being taken to protect domestic animals?**

Connecticut has developed and implemented a statewide WNV response plan that includes surveillance, control strategies, and dissemination of information. State and federal agencies are working together to identify the presence of WNV. Reducing mosquito-breeding habitats in each community can greatly lower the potential for West Nile virus to become a significant threat to humans and domestic animals.

## **Where do I call if I need more information on West Nile virus in domestic animals?**

Call the Office of the State Veterinarian, Department of Agriculture at (860) 713-2505

Mosquito Management Program Information:

**Department of Environmental Protection**

Website- <http://dep.state.ct.us>

(860) 424-4184 - *Latest information on test results, spray locations, protective measures.*

(860) 642-7630 - *Technical questions regarding mosquitoes, mosquito control measures.*

**Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station**

Website - <http://www.state.ct.us/caes>

(203) 974-8500 - *Mosquito trapping.*

**Department of Public Health**

Website - <http://www.state.ct.us/dph>

(860) 509-7994 - *WNV infections in people.*

(860) 509-7742 - *Effects of pesticides on people.*

**Department of Agriculture**

Website - <http://www.state.ct.us/doag>

(860) 713-2505 - *WNV infections in domestic animals, including livestock, poultry, and pets.*

Call your local health department to report dead birds. You can find the number in the blue pages of your local phone book.

This brochure was written by the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Epidemiology and Occupational Health, for the Mosquito Management Program.



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