

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

	<p><u>100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment</u> Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!</p>	
--	---	--

What You Should Know About West Nile Virus

By Becky Sisk

What You Should Know About West Nile Virus by Becky Sisk

Article Title: What You Should Know About West Nile Virus

Author Name: Becky Sisk, Ph.D.

Contact Email Address: <mailto:becky@enursescribe.com>

Category: Health & Fitness

Word Count: 677

You have permission to publish this article electronically, as long as the resource box at the end is included. Please contact me if you use this article at <mailto:becky@enursescribe.com>.

What You Should Know About West Nile Virus

(c) 2002

By Becky Sisk, Ph.D.

The West Nile virus (WNV) was first documented in Uganda in 1937. The first case in the United States was reported in New York City in 1999. Additional human cases are identified and deaths are reported daily. Here's what you need to know.

WHO CONTRACTS WNV?

WNV affects all races and men and women equally. The elderly, chronically ill, or immunosuppressed are more likely to become seriously ill or die from WNV.

What You Should Know About West Nile Virus

HOW IS WNV TRANSMITTED?

- WNV is carried from animal to animal by mosquito bites. Birds (especially crows) are the most common victims, but WNV has infected horses and smaller animals as well.
- Birds, horses, humans, and other animals do not transmit the disease. Mosquitoes do. Therefore, you will not get WNV if you handle animals who are infected.
- The more mosquito bites you have, the more likely you are to become infected. This does **not** mean that you should run to the doctor or your emergency room when a mosquito bites you. The likelihood that you have become infected is extremely

small.

HOW DO DOCTORS DIAGNOSE WNV?

- The signs and symptoms of WNV are fever, headache, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, muscle pain, eye pain, rash, and enlarged lymph glands. According to a recent article in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, the incubation period of WNV is from three to 14 days.
- WNV is dangerous when it develops into viral encephalitis or viral meningitis. Symptoms of viral encephalitis include confusion and a gradual loss of consciousness. Symptoms of viral meningitis include a stiff neck and neurological signs your doctor will recognize.
- Doctors diagnose WNV through a history and physical examination. They also order a blood test to detect the antibody to the WNV and or to find the virus itself in the blood. A case is considered to be "probable West Nile virus" when the WNV antibody is identified and "confirmed West Nile virus" when the virus itself is identified in the blood.

HOW DO DOCTORS TREAT WNV?

Treatment for WNV is entirely supportive because there is no medication that specifically fights the disease. As with any infection, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, get adequate rest, and take fever reducers, such as acetaminophen or aspirin, if you have symptoms of WNV. If you have the symptoms and have been bitten by a mosquito recently, contact your physician.

What You Should Know About West Nile Virus

People who have viral encephalitis or viral meningitis often require intensive care, medications to treat seizures, a breathing machine, and replacement of fluids and electrolytes.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT WNV?

- Drain any collections of stagnant water found in your yard, neighborhood, or work place.
- Use mosquito repellants containing "DEET," carefully following package directions.
- * Use a repellant that is no more than 10% DEET for children.
- * Treat clothing, skin, bedding, tents and tent screens as well as people.
- * Avoid getting mosquito repellant on the hands to prevent getting DEET into the mouth, eyes, ears.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants when outdoors.
- Avoid wearing bright colors or using perfumes outdoors. Both may

attract mosquitoes.

- Stay indoors from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are more active.
- Report dead birds or other animals to state and local health departments.
- Cooperate with local health department and governmental efforts to rid the community of mosquitoes. They use two types of chemicals: Natural compounds that kill the larvae and methoprine to kill adults. Methoprine can cause eye irritations or skin rash, though the incidence is rare.

HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WNV?

Go to the following resources to find out more about WNV. The CDC site has the very latest information, including an up-to-date map showing the most current cases.

Centers for Disease Control (2002). Prevention: Avoid mosquito bites to avoid infection. Retrieved August 12, 2002.
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>.

Cunha, B.A. (2002). West Nile encephalitis. Retrieved September 15, 2002. <http://www.emedicine.com/medopic3160.htm>. (Requires free registration to access).

Petersen, L.R., & Marfin, A.A. (2002). West Nile virus: A primer for the clinician. *Annals of Internal Medicine*(137), 173–179.

What You Should Know About West Nile Virus

Becky Sisk, PhD., R.N., is owner and webmaster of NurseScribe, <http://www.enursescribe.com/>. Contact her at becky@enursescribe.com.

This article is for information use only and is not medical advice. Please consult your physician if you are concerned any medical conditions.

For free articles on medical topics, go to <http://www.eNurseScribe.com/medarts.htm>.

Becky Sisk, PhD., R.N., is owner and webmaster of NurseScribe, <http://www.enursescribe.com/>.

The History of the West Nile Virus

By Karen Foster

Where did it come from?

The West Nile virus was first isolated in 1937 in the West Nile district of Uganda. The disease has spread through many parts of Europe and Asia, as well as North and South America.

How did it spread?

We do not know exactly how the virus spread but there are several theories. Most likely the West Nile virus was imported to other countries by a bird or mosquito that was infected by the disease. The virus has been found in over 150 different types of birds including: crows, ravens, blue jays and magpies. Out of the 74 different species of mosquitoes found in all parts of Canada, only ten have been found to carry the West Nile virus.

How is the West Nile virus transmitted?

Mosquitoes become carriers of the West Nile virus after feeding on the blood of birds infected with the virus. The West Nile virus is transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Recently, scientists have discovered that people can become infected with the West Nile virus through other ways like blood transfusions and organ/tissue transplants. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the disease can be contracted by kissing or touching someone who is infected with it.

The West Nile virus poses the greatest risk to those with weakened immune systems or chronic disease and the risk of serious health issues pertaining to the virus increase with age. The risk of being infected with the West Nile virus is greatest during July and August, peak mosquito season. However,

What You Should Know About West Nile Virus

it is good to keep in mind that mosquito season lasts from as early as mid April until after the first hard frost usually in October.

Stopping the spread

The very best way to avoid contacting the West Nile virus is by minimizing your exposure to mosquitoes. Other ways to help stop the spread of the West Nile virus include:

- Eliminate mosquito breeding grounds around your home (these include places where standing water can collect such as wading pools, empty flower pots and bird baths)
- Report any dead birds found in your area to the local authorities.
- Use insect repellants that contain DEET and install screens in your windows and doors
- Use mosquito netting when camping

Keep in mind that although the West Nile virus is not likely to disappear any time in the near future, it is important to remember that the risk of contacting the West Nile virus is low and the risk of serious health effects from the disease even lower.

Karen Foster is the content manager and editor for Tiny Mosquito: Understanding the Mosquito. For more information about mosquitoes, visit her site at

.



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!