

## **Protect Yourself** **West Nile Virus**

West Nile Virus (WNV) infection is an illness transmitted to humans primarily by mosquitoes. Flooded areas, particularly in warm climates, provide ideal conditions for mosquitoes to breed in stagnant water. Bites from infected mosquitoes may result in illnesses which range from mild flu-like conditions (West Nile fever) to severe and sometimes life-threatening diseases requiring hospitalization (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis). If you have symptoms of severe illness or have concerns about your symptoms, seek immediate medical assistance.

### **Signs & Symptoms of West Nile Fever (mild illness)**

- Tiredness, headache, fever, body aches.
- Swollen lymph nodes, and/or a skin rash on the body.

### **Signs & Symptoms of West Nile Encephalitis or Meningitis (severe illness)**

- Nausea and vomiting.
- Headache, high fever, stiff neck.
- Disorientation (in very severe cases, coma).
- Tremors, convulsions and muscle weakness (in very severe cases, paralysis).

### **Preventing Mosquito Exposure**

- Reduce or eliminate mosquito breeding grounds (i.e., sources of standing water).
- Cover as much skin as possible by wearing light weight long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks when possible.
- Avoid use of perfumes and colognes when working outdoors.
- Use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, such as DEET or Picaridin, on skin that is not covered by clothing.
- Choose a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be exposed. The more DEET or Picaridin a repellent contains, the longer it will protect you.
- Spray insect repellent on the outside of your clothing (mosquitoes can bite through thin clothing).
- Do NOT spray insect repellent on skin that is under clothing.
- Do NOT spray on skin that is irritated or cut/lacerated.
- Do NOT spray aerosol or pump products in enclosed areas or directly on your face. Do not allow insect repellent to contact your eyes or mouth. Do not use repellents on cuts, wounds or irritated skin.
- After working, use soap and water to wash skin and clothing that has been treated with insect repellent.
- Be extra vigilant at dusk and dawn when many types of mosquitoes are most active.

For more information:



**Occupational  
Safety and Health  
Administration**

U.S. Department of Labor

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) (800) 321-OSHA (6742)