WEST NILE VIRUS IS A RISK
YOU CAN DO SOMETHING
ABOUT WITH A FEW
SIMPLE STEPS.

West Nile virus is now in most
of the United States. The most
important way people become
infected is through the bite of an
infected mosquito. You can reduce
your chance of getting infected by
avoiding mosquito bites.

ADULTS ARE AT
HIGHEST RISK

People over age 50
have a higher risk for
becoming seriously ill
when they get infected
with West Nile virus.
People under age 50
can also become sick,
but it is less likely.

WHAT HAPPENS IF
I GET INFECTED?

Most people who get infected with West Nile virus do not
have any symptoms. Some people develop a mild illness
called West Nile Fever. This mild illness gets better on
its own. No treatment is needed.

A small number of people (less than 1 out of 100) who
get infected with West Nile virus develop severe disease,
called West Nile encephalitis or West Nile
meningitis (inflammation of the brain or the area
around the brain). This severe disease usually requires
hospitalization. In some cases, especially among older
persons, it can result in death.

Symptoms of severe illness include headache, high
fever, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness,
tremors (shaking), convulsions, coma, and paralysis.
See your doctor if you develop these symptoms.

There is no specific treatment for the West Nile virus
infection. There is no vaccine available for people.
Three Ways to Reduce Your West Nile Virus Risk

1. Avoid Mosquito Bites!
   Spray! Spray insect repellent containing DEET (Look for N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on exposed skin when you go outdoors. Spray clothing with repellents containing DEET or permethrin. Products with a higher percentage of DEET (up to 50%) give longer protection.
   Don’t spray repellent on skin under clothing.
   Don’t use permethrin on skin.

   Use Repellent Carefully! Repellents containing DEET are very safe for adults and children when used according to directions. Don’t put repellent on kid’s hands because it may get in their mouth or eyes.

   See www.cdc.gov/westnile for detailed information about prevention and repellent use.

2. Mosquito-Proof Your Home!
   Screens: Keep mosquitoes outside by fixing or installing window and door screens.

   Drain Standing Water:
   Don’t give mosquitoes a place to breed. A small amount of standing water can be enough for a mosquito to lay her eggs.

   Look around every week for possible mosquito breeding places. Empty water from buckets, cans, pool covers, flower pots and other items. Throw away or cover up stored tires and other items that aren’t being used. Clean pet water bowls weekly. Check if rain gutters are clogged. If you store water outside or have a well, make sure it’s covered up. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.

3. Help Your Community!
   Dead birds help health departments track West Nile virus. Check with local or state health department to find out their policy for reporting dead birds.