

West Nile Virus



Infectious Disease
Epidemiology &
Prevention Division

What is West Nile Virus?

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West Nile virus (WNV) is the most commonly reported mosquito-borne disease in Indiana and the United States. WNV in Indiana is primarily transmitted to humans through the bites of mosquitoes in the *Culex* genus, which are found in all Indiana counties. Most people do not develop any symptoms when infected with WNV, but severe illness can occur. Mosquito bite prevention is vital to preventing WNV and protecting overall health.

What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus?

Most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms. About 2–14 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito, roughly 20% of infected individuals may experience:

- Fever
- Head and body aches
- Joint pains
- Vomiting
- Rash

Less than 1% of people infected with WNV experience the following severe symptoms:

- Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain)
- Meningitis (inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord)
- Paralysis

People with conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, etc. are more likely to experience severe WNV symptoms. WNV-related deaths are rare, occurring in about 10% of cases who experience severe WNV illness.

West Nile Virus Data

For data on WNV detections in people, horses, and mosquitoes, visit our Mosquito-Borne Activity Dashboard:
<http://bit.ly/4gmm5qr>

Diagnosis

Healthcare providers diagnose WNV based on symptoms and laboratory testing results. If you think you or a family member have WNV, contact your healthcare provider.

Treatment

There is no medication available to treat WNV. Patients experiencing severe cases of WNV often require supportive care and/or rehabilitation to manage symptoms.

Prevention

The best way to prevent WNV exposure is through mosquito bite prevention methods, including EPA-registered repellents, protective clothing, limiting time outdoors between dusk and dawn, and indoor barriers.



Use EPA-registered
**mosquito
repellent**



Wear **long,
loose-fitting**
shirts and
pants



Avoid being
outside from
**dusk to
dawn**



Use **screens** on
windows and
doors **or air
conditioning**

More Information

For more information on West Nile virus, visit the IDOH West Nile virus webpage.

