



MOSQUITO PROTECTION INFORMATION

Some tips to protecting children from mosquitoes:

- ✦ Mosquitoes love the dampness that can be found in kids' forts, tree houses and kiddie pools, which makes enjoyment difficult.
- ✦ A sandbox in the shade is a magnet for mosquitoes. Mosquitoes do not like the sun, so when in search of a nice shady area to play in remember - these places are a virtual haven to mosquitoes. Simply move the sandbox into a sunnier area and remember to use sunscreen on exposed skin.
- ✦ Keep children out of dank, dark areas, like underneath the porch or deck. These might be great areas for adventure to a child, but are areas of relief for mosquitoes trying to avoid the hot sun.
- ✦ Beware of standing water found in things like birdbaths, wading pools and tire swings. If water sits outside for too long, it becomes stagnant and provides ideal conditions for mosquitoes to lay eggs. Adult female mosquitoes can lay up to 300 eggs at a time, so it's important to remember to change birdbath water at least once a week and kiddie pool water once or twice a week. Keep water from collecting in tire swings or in any other areas where pooling may occur.
- ✦ Wind is a natural enemy of the mosquito. Lattice or a trellis can block the wind. Mosquitoes are poor fliers, and by removing these obstacles that block wind and by keeping the

breeze flowing through your yard or patio, you can impede the mosquitoes' ability to attack.

- ✦ Avoid being outside at dawn, when the sun first comes up, and at dusk, when the sun is setting. This is when the mosquitoes like to feed the most.
- ✦ Use mosquito coils and citronella candles during barbecues and outdoor activities. A mosquito coil can clear a 10'x10' area for up to 4 hours. Use several to protect large areas.
- ✦ Use insect repellent that contains the active ingredient DEET. Kids, have mom or dad put it on for you! The duration of protection for repellents depends on the DEET concentration. When applying repellent to children, use just enough to cover exposed skin. Use common sense and **always follow label instructions**. Remember mosquitoes will find an unprotected area as small as a dime.
- ✦ When camping or hiking in high-mosquito zones, make sure to wear light colored lightweight long pants, socks and loose fitting long sleeve shirts.
- ✦ Avoid wearing the color blue, which some experts say attracts mosquitoes.



WEST NILE VIRUS INFORMATION

WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?

West Nile virus is a potentially deadly strain of encephalitis transmitted by mosquitoes. People can contract WNV if bitten by an infected mosquito. **Most people bitten by WNV-infected mosquitoes do not get sick.** However, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems are more prone to infections. Symptoms begin 3-15 days after the bite from an infected mosquito.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS?

Symptoms may include fever, headache, nausea, rash, stiff neck, muscle weakness, and disorientation. WNV is fatal in some 3-15% of cases with serious symptoms. There is no vaccine for WNV. **Seek medical advice IMMEDIATELY if two of the following symptoms appear:**

- ✦ Sustained fever above 103°F
- ✦ Severe headaches
- ✦ Muscle aches and pain, disorientation, neurological ticks and tremors, or blurred vision
- ✦ Nausea and vomiting

WHAT IS THE TRANSMISSION CYCLE OF WEST NILE VIRUS?

The natural cycle of WNV involves birds and mosquitoes. Mosquitoes acquire the virus from biting an infected bird. The infected mosquito is then able to transmit the infection to healthy birds, horses or humans. Encephalitis is sometimes transmitted from adult female mosquitoes to their eggs. Some bird species display no symptoms while other species may get sick and die, notably crows. Not all sick or dead birds will

have the disease and there is no evidence that people can contract WNV directly from either live or dead birds.

WHAT SPECIES OF MOSQUITO IS INVOLVED?

Several species of mosquitoes in Rhode Island can transmit WNV from birds to humans. The urban "house mosquito" readily bites both birds and humans. This species can transmit WNV to humans. Other common species that can transmit WNV include one found throughout wooded areas in Rhode Island and two that are found in saltmarshes.

HOW LONG DOES THE WEST NILE VIRUS SEASON LAST?

Humans can only contract WNV from the bite of an infected mosquito. WNV transmission occurs when mosquitoes are active - from May to October. It is more prevalent in the late summer and early fall. WNV survives in mosquitoes that overwinter.

WHAT PRECAUTIONS DO I TAKE AGAINST WNV?

Some common sense measures that reduce exposure to mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases, such as WNV include:

- ✦ limit outdoor evening activity
- ✦ wear protective clothing
- ✦ repair window screens
- ✦ reduce areas where water can collect and eliminate standing water on your property and in neighborhoods
- ✦ use bug spray/repellents containing DEET - follow directions

DEM information line: (401) 222-2793

DEM Website at www.state.ri.us/dem

CENTERS FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL:
www.cdc.gov