

# **IMPORTANT FACTS**

## **What is West Nile Virus (WNV)?**

WNV is a virus that can cause disease in people, birds, horses and sometimes other animals. WNV is spread by mosquito bites.

## **How do people get infected with WNV?**

By being bitten by mosquitoes that are carrying the virus. Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on birds that have the virus in their blood. Once a mosquito is infected with the virus it can transmit the virus to humans, birds, horses or other animals through a bite.

## **Can you get West Nile virus directly from people, birds or other animals?**

WNV is NOT spread from person-to-person by touching or kissing a person who is infected with the virus. There is no evidence that a person can get WNV by touching a dead bird or other animal. However, it is a good idea for general sanitary reasons that you wear gloves or use a shovel when handling any sick or dead animals.

## **I've gotten a mosquito bite. Should I be tested for WNV?**

No, only a small percent of mosquitoes carry WNV. See a doctor if you develop the symptoms below.

## **What are the symptoms of WNV?**

Most people bitten by an infected mosquito do not develop any symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they usually appear about 3 to 14 days after being bitten. The disease may be mild or serious. Mild illness includes fever, headache and body aches. In a small number of cases, particularly among the elderly, the disease can affect the central nervous system causing high fever, stiff neck, muscle weakness, disorientation, brain inflammation (encephalitis), coma and rarely, death.

## **Is there a treatment for WNV?**

There is no specific treatment for WNV. Most people with mild illness recover in a few days. In more severe cases, patients are treated with supportive therapy, which can include hospitalization, intravenous fluids and respiratory support.

For more information on West Nile Virus call the Office of Epidemiology at 505-827-0006

# WEST NILE VIRUS, MOSQUITOES AND YOUR FAMILY



## **Using Insect Repellents Safely**

For the longest lasting protection from mosquito bites, use insect repellent products with no more than 20-30 percent DEET for adults and less than 10 percent for children aged 2 years to 12 years.

If you choose not to use DEET, products containing soybean oil or eucalyptus oil have been found to be effective, but must be applied more often because they do not repel mosquitoes for as long as DEET\*.

In a recent study\*, products containing citronella or Skin-So-Soft® were NOT shown to be as effective, lasting on average only about 20 minutes or less.

Only adults should apply repellent on children.

Only apply repellent to exposed skin and clothing. Do not use repellent under clothing.

Do not apply repellent over cuts, wounds, sunburn or irritated skin.

Spray repellent on your hands in order to apply it to your face. Don't apply repellent to your eyes or mouth.

Wash off repellent daily and reapply as needed.

\*New England Journal of Medicine, July 4, 2002

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***Fight the Bite!***

# PROTECT YOUR HOME, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOURSELF

Avoid outside activity at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. This is very important for the elderly and small children.

Wear protective clothing (long pants and long sleeves) and apply insect repellent when outside. Be sure to use insect repellent safely and according to label directions.

Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens that are in good repair so mosquitoes can't get inside.

Control mosquitoes from breeding by eliminating standing water around your home.

