



WEST NILE VIRUS

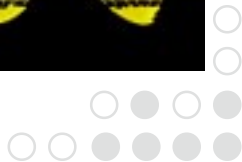
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Edward G. Rendell, Governor
Dennis C Wolff, Secretary

Information



West Nile Virus (WNV) was first found in the United States in 1999. The virus was previously found only in parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. It was probably introduced into this country by an infected bird or mosquito. Since 1999, it has spread across the U.S. and parts of Canada. West Nile Virus can cause encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain, in susceptible animals and people.



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How is

West Nile Virus Spread?



mosquito infected with WNV may infect a bird when taking a blood meal from that bird. Other mosquitoes can then pick up the virus from the infected bird.

Other animals and people can become infected when bitten by a mosquito that is carrying the virus.

Transmission Cycle of West Nile Virus

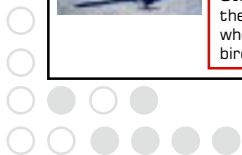
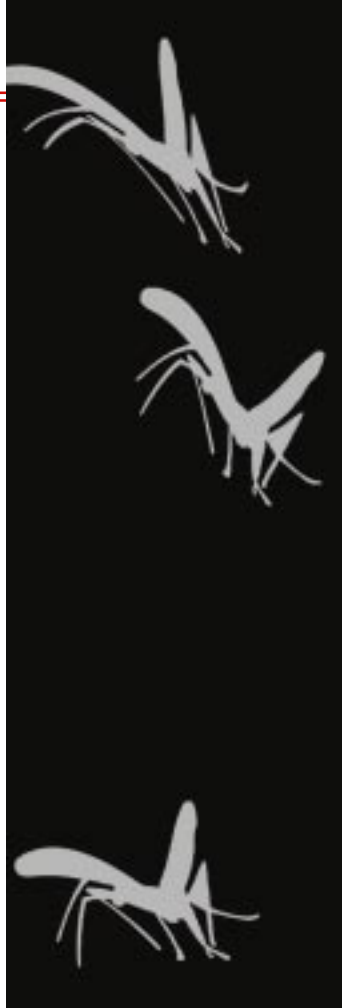
Birds become infected when bitten by an infected mosquito.



The infected mosquito may then bite animals or people and pass the virus to them.



Other mosquitoes may then pick up the virus when biting an infected bird.



What animals

are most at Risk?

Birds and horses seem to be most likely to develop illness from WNV infection. Crows are especially susceptible, and most crows that are infected become sick and die. Not all horses that become infected actually get sick. In horses that do become ill, symptoms can range from mild depression and lethargy to signs of severe neurologic disease (weakness, twitching, paralysis). WNV has been diagnosed in other species of animals, including cattle, dogs, and cats. Most of these animals did not show severe signs of illness after infection. Animals that do become ill may show signs of encephalitis, similar to horses. If you have questions concerning WNV in animals, or testing for animals, contact your veterinarian or the PA Department of Agriculture.

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TREATMENT



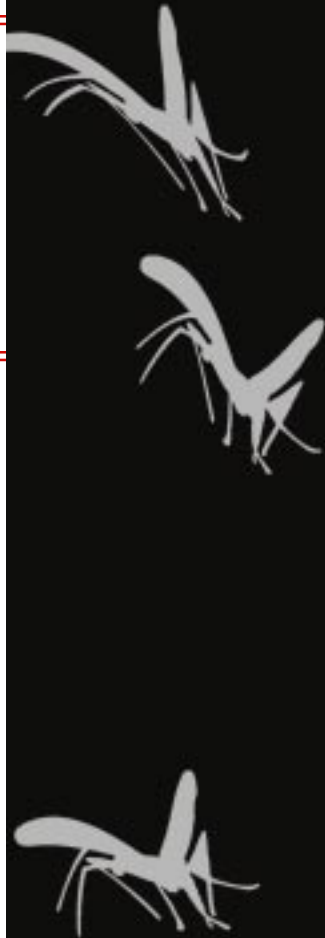
There is no specific treatment for animals that do develop symptoms following infection with WNV. Supportive and symptomatic veterinary care of animals showing illness is recommended. Many animals showing symptoms do recover with treatment after illness.

PREVENTION



A vaccine for horses is available through veterinarians. Owners should keep records of vaccination, because a blood test cannot distinguish between vaccinated and infected horses. This may affect international shipping. Vaccination of horses against EEE, WEE, and VEE does not protect them from being infected with WNV. Although a vaccine for WNV is available, the best method of prevention is reducing the chance of exposure to the virus. This means reduction of mosquitoes and their breeding sites by reducing the amount of standing water on your property. If you need help evaluating your property, contact your county DEP office.

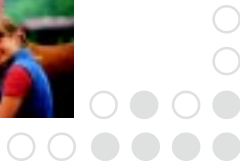
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Control Program



The Department of Agriculture is cooperating with the Departments of Environmental Protection and Health to find mosquitoes that may spread the virus in PA. WNV has been declared a reportable disease. If a positive horse or other animal is identified, the Department of Environmental Protection will contact the owner to schedule a visit, so that they can help the owner evaluate the farm or home property for mosquitoes and mosquito breeding areas. Control measures may be carried out if it is necessary to reduce the risk. This risk analysis and mosquito control is free and may help prevent additional cases of WNV. For more information, visit Pennsylvania's WNV website at www.westnile.state.pa.us.



T e s t i n g



est Nile Virus cannot be diagnosed in a live animal without a blood test.

It is important to identify infected animals, since they indicate that mosquitoes carrying the virus are in the area. Steps can then be taken

to reduce the number of mosquitoes. For more information, ask your veterinarian or call the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

West Nile Virus in People



est Nile Virus generally does not cause severe illness in healthy people. Many people that are

bitten by an infected mosquito do not become ill. Many of those infected that do become ill show

signs of a mild, flu-like illness. Others may develop more severe symptoms. Call the Department of Health or your physician for more information about the disease and how to reduce your risk of infection.





PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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For More West Nile Virus Information:

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Dr. Nan Hanshaw Roberts, West Nile Virus Coordinator
Phone - 717.783.6897
Hours - 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Pennsylvania Veterinary Laboratory
Phone - 717.787.8808
Hours - 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Phone - 717.705.7694

Pennsylvania Department of Health
Phone - 1.877.PA.HEALTH
www.westnile.state.pa.us

