

West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases



For more information, please contact your local health department, or visit our Web site at: www.westnileaz.com.

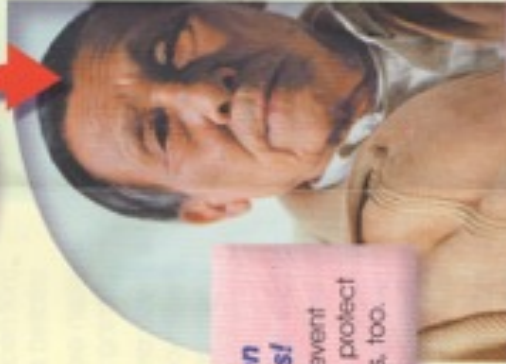
What is West Nile virus?

It's one of a group of viruses spread by mosquito bites.

Mosquito-borne viruses, such as those that cause encephalitis and dengue fever, are not new to the U.S. West Nile virus is more recent, and is a growing health concern.

West Nile virus can cause mild to severe illness.

Most people who get infected do not get sick. However, West Nile virus has caused serious and often life-changing illnesses in many people. Infections involving the brain and spinal cord can sometimes be fatal.



How is West Nile virus spread?

Some birds carry the West Nile virus in their blood.

Mosquitoes that bite these birds can become infected with the virus.

An infected mosquito can then pass the virus to people.

Mosquitoes can also pass it to some animals, such as horses. Ask a veterinarian about the virus and pets. There's no evidence that people get the virus from birds or other animals.

The virus is not spread from person to person the way colds are.

But, in a very small number of cases, the virus has been spread through blood transfusions, transplanted organs and breastfeeding, and from mother to child during pregnancy. **If you have concerns about these possible modes of transmission, talk with your health-care provider.** You cannot get the virus by giving blood.

West Nile virus should be taken seriously by people of all ages!

Learning about the virus and ways to prevent infection is key. Steps you take can help protect you from other mosquito-borne diseases, too.

Please read:

Talk to your health-care provider! This folder is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health-care provider. • The photos in this folder are of models. The models have no relation to the issues presented.

Communities and health agencies are working hard to protect public health

through:

- mosquito monitoring and control
- research for new tests and treatments, and possibly a vaccine
- public education.