

West Nile Virus



Lancaster County
Health Advisory Council

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne virus that can, in rare cases, cause encephalitis or inflammation of the brain.

WNV was discovered in 1937 in the West Nile district of Uganda. WNV was identified in 1999 in the United States.

WNV has been established as a seasonal epidemic in North America. WNV infections flare up in the summer and into the fall.

How does it spread?

A bite from an infected mosquito spreads WNV. Contact with infected people or animals does not spread WNV.

Who is at risk?

All people are at risk of getting WNV. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop serious symptoms of WNV if they do get sick.



What can I do to protect myself from WNV?

1

Use mosquito repellent when outside.

2

Ensure that your home has good screens on windows to keep mosquitos out.

3

Drain anything that holds water twice a week, i.e. a watering can, bird baths, empty flower pots.

4

Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants, especially between dusk until dawn.



Scan the QR Code or call 717-277-5275 ext. 112 for Information about obtaining Mosquito Control.



West Nile Virus

What should I do if I think I have WNV?

Milder WNV illness improves on its own, and people do not need to seek medical attention for this infection though they may choose to do so.

If you develop symptoms of severe WNV illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately.

For any questions regarding you or your family's health, consult your chosen primary care provider.



Lancaster County Health
Advisory Council
Published March 2023



Lancaster County EMA
info@lancema.us
717-664-1200

Resources:

CDC, West Nile Virus Fact Sheet.
Lancaster and Lebanon County Mosquito-borne Disease Control Program
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Mosquito-borne Diseases

What are the symptoms of West Nile Virus?

No Symptoms

Approximately 80 percent of people who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all, but there is no way to know in advance if you will develop an illness or not.

Mild Symptoms

Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected will have symptoms which can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days to as long as several weeks.

Severe Symptoms

About 1 in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.