

West Nile Virus Facts

For More Information:

West Nile Virus Hotline

1-866-703-4636 Toll-free

DHS Health Services

503-731-4024

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Toll-Free:

1-888-246-2675

1-888-246-2857 (Español)

1-866-874-2646 TTY

Yamhill County Public Health

412 NE Ford St.
McMinnville, OR 97128
503-434-7525 or
503-554-7842



www.co.yamhill.or.us/ph

Introduction

- West Nile Virus is a potentially deadly disease that is carried to humans, birds and animals by infected mosquitoes.
- Migrating birds, such as ravens, crows and jays, play a major role in spreading the disease.
- Commonly found in Asia and the European Mediterranean, the virus began showing up in the U.S. in New York in 1999. The disease has continued to spread across the country and has now been detected in all states, including Oregon.
- The first avian case of West Nile Virus in Oregon has been confirmed in a dead crow in Malheur County near the Idaho border. The disease is expected to spread to other areas of the state this summer.

Risks

- All residents of areas where virus activity has been identified are at risk of getting West Nile fever or West Nile encephalitis.
- Persons greater than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease.
- There is no documented evidence that a pregnancy is at risk due to infection with West Nile virus. However, some evidence indicates the virus can be transmitted in breast milk.
- In temperate zones, such as Oregon, West Nile encephalitis cases occur primarily in summer or early fall.
- West Nile Virus is not transmitted from person to person, bird to person or animal to person.
- There is no evidence that a person can get the virus from handling live or dead infected birds, however people are advised to wear protective gloves when handling dead birds.

Symptoms

- Eighty to 90 percent of cases result in no illness or only mild symptoms, which may include fever, headache and body aches, often with skin rash and swollen lymph glands.
- More severe infection may be marked by headache, high fever, sore throat, backache, muscle aches, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis.
- The virus interferes with normal central nervous system functioning and causes inflammation of brain tissue.
- In one case out of 150, West Nile Virus causes meningitis or "encephalitis" (inflammation of the brain).
- The incubation period in humans, from infection by mosquito bite to the onset of the disease symptoms is usually three to 15 days.
- One in every 150 people severely affected by the virus will die. Fatality rates are highest in the elderly.

You can also visit the following Web sites for the latest information about West Nile Virus:

Oregon Department of Human Services:

www.dhs.state.or.us/public/health/acd/wnile/index.cfm

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm

Yamhill County Public Health

www.co.yamhill.or.us/ph

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Preventing West Nile Virus

- The state is working with local health departments and vector control districts to monitor mosquito-breeding sites and take appropriate preventative actions, as necessary.
- A comprehensive mosquito, bird, animal and human surveillance program is underway.
- It's easy to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus. The public can help by taking a number of simple voluntary precautions.
- Mosquitoes must have standing water to breed. Get rid of water where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.
 - Remove old tires, buckets, cans, drums, bottles or any containers that hold water.
 - Fill or drain any low spots in your yard.
 - Cover trash containers.
 - Inspect rain gutters and downspouts and remove leaves and other debris.
 - Empty stagnant water in birdbaths, plant pots, drip trays, small wading ponds, pet dishes and other containers once a week.
 - Empty standing water from protective tarps, canoes, kayaks and other boats or items stored in your yard.
 - Repair leaky outdoor faucets.
 - Properly maintain and treat your pool. Cover pools and hot tubs when not in use to prevent accumulation of leaves and debris. Be sure pool covers do not hold pockets of water.
 - Clean flat roofs and air conditioner drains frequently.
 - Plant mosquito-eating fish in water troughs and ornamental ponds.
- Prevent mosquito bites—the first line of defense against mosquito-borne diseases is to avoid mosquitoes.
- Apply insect repellent sparingly to exposed skin (including usual cautions).
- When possible, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when you are outdoors.
- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when you are outdoors with infants.
- Consider staying indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening, which are peak mosquito biting times.
- Install or repair window and door screens so that mosquitoes cannot get indoors.
- Report dead birds to the local vector-control district or local county health department.
- Avoid using retail pesticides to control mosquitoes in your yard.

Treatment

- If you think you may have West Nile encephalitis, seek medical care as soon as possible.
- If you are determined to be at high risk and have symptoms of West Nile encephalitis, your health care provider will draw a blood sample for testing.
- There is no vaccine against West Nile encephalitis and no specific treatment beyond supportive care. In more severe cases, hospitalization may be necessary.