



## You Can Take Steps to Prevent West Nile Virus

West Nile is a virus you can take steps to prevent. September is peak season for West Nile virus.

The virus is spread to people from mosquito bites. Mosquitoes get infected by feeding on infected birds. Anyone can get West Nile virus, but many people do not have the illness. Only about 20 percent of people who are infected will develop symptoms.

People over age 50 are more likely to develop symptoms of West Nile virus and should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

The best way to protect yourself from getting West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites. Follow these steps to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes:

- Wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors at dusk or dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent such as those with DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. These products can be used on skin or clothing. Choose a product that provides protection for the amount of time spent outdoors. Permethrin is another type of insect repellent. It can only be used on clothing. ALWAYS follow the directions on the product label.
- Keep mosquitoes outside by fixing or installing window and door screens.
- Drain standing water and empty water from buckets, flowerpots, cans and other items. A small amount of standing water can be enough for a mosquito to lay eggs.

Mild symptoms include flu-like illness with fever, headache, body aches, nausea and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.

Severe symptoms include high fever, neck stiffness and swelling of the brain (encephalitis) which can lead to coma, convulsions and death. Less than 1% of infected people will develop severe symptoms. Older people and people with compromised immune systems may have severe illness.

For more information and tips visit: <https://health.morriscountynj.gov/public/disease/westnile/>