

PREVENTION OF WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTIONS

West Nile Virus (WNV) is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has fed on an infected bird. Fortunately, these annoying insects that invade our backyard parties and attack us in the park can be controlled, and you can protect yourself and your family from WNV

Summer is the peak of the WNV season. Take these preventative measures to reduce the risk for being infected:

- Use mosquito repellent.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants.
- Limit outdoor activity during the dawn and evening hours when mosquitoes are most active.

Help reduce the mosquito population by cleaning or removing items on your property that can collect water which serves as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Clogged gutters, flowerpots and old tires are examples. Change the water in birdbaths at least once a week.

People infected with WNV usually have no or only mild symptoms such as low-grade fever, headache, and swollen lymph glands. Less than 1 percent of those infected with the virus develop more severe symptoms which include a severe headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis. The elderly are more at risk for severe illness.

For more information on WNV and New Jersey's control measures, visit the DHSS West Nile web page at www.nj.gov/health/cd/westnile/enceph.htm, the Department of Environmental Protection at www.nj.gov/dep/mosquito/ or call 1-888-NO-NJ WNV.