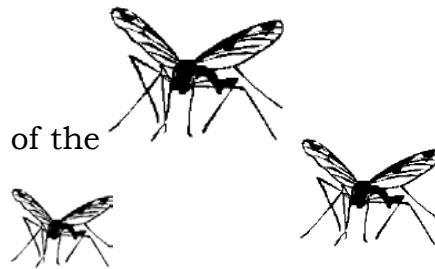


# PERSONAL PROTECTION against WEST NILE VIRUS

## Q: WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?

**A:** West Nile is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord).



## Q: HOW IS WEST NILE VIRUS SPREAD?

**A:** West Nile Virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito becomes infected by biting a bird that carries the virus. You or your family cannot get West Nile Virus from a person who has the disease. West Nile Virus is not spread by person-to-person contact such as touching, kissing, or caring for someone who is infected.

## Q: WHAT CAN I DO TO REDUCE MY FAMILY'S RISK OF BECOMING INFECTED WITH WEST NILE VIRUS?

**A:** From April to October, when mosquitoes are most active, take the following precautions:

*If outside from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active, or during the day in an area where there are weeds, tall grass, or bushes, people should wear protective clothing, such as long pants, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts, and socks, and consider the use of an insect repellent containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide).*

Products with a low concentration of DEET may be appropriate for situations where exposure to mosquitoes is minimal. Higher concentrations of DEET may be useful in highly infested areas or with species that are more difficult to repel. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that repellents used on children should not contain more than 10% DEET. Concentrations of up to 50% DEET have been shown to be acceptable for adults. Where appropriate, consider using non-chemical ways to deter biting insects such as protective clothing (as outlined above), window and door screens, and wearable netting when camping.

**Use DEET according to manufacturer's directions on the label.**

*Store DEET out of reach of children. Always follow label instructions.*

*Use caution when using repellents containing DEET on children.*

*Prevent children from inhaling DEET during application. Apply to your own hands and then rub it on the child.*

*Do not apply on hands or near eyes and mouth of young children.*

*Do not allow children to apply repellents themselves.*

*Reapply when mosquitos begin to be troublesome again.*

*Wash all treated skin and clothing with soap and water after returning indoors.*

*Never use repellents over cuts, wounds, sunburned, or irritated skin.*

*Depending on the concentration of DEET in a product, repellants are effective for approximately 3-6 hours. Avoid excessive use of DEET. Use sparingly to cover exposed skin and clothing.*

*Do not apply to skin covered by clothing.*

\*Note that vitamin B, ultrasonic devices, and citronella have not been shown to be effective in preventing mosquito bites.



# ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION against WEST NILE VIRUS

## Q: WHAT CAN I DO AROUND MY HOME TO HELP REDUCE EXPOSURE TO MOSQUITOES?

**A:** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing or slow-moving water, like ditches or stormwater retention basins. Unattended weeds, tall grass, and bushes can provide adult mosquitoes with hiding places. They can enter homes through unscreened windows or doors, or broken screens.



*Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace all screens that have tears or holes.*

*Remove waste or old tires from your property.*



*Dispose of tin cans, discarded toys, plastic containers, empty ceramic pots, or similar water-holding containers.*

*Make sure roof gutters drain properly. Clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.*



*Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs. If not in use, keep empty and covered. Drain water from pool and boat covers.*

*Redesign landscapes that do not promote good air circulation and water drainage.*



*Change the water in stock tanks and birdbaths every 3 to 4 days.*

*Turn over plastic wading pools, wheelbarrows, and canoes when not in use.*



*Seek out standing water that may be hiding on your property or in your neighborhood.*

*Help neighbors -- especially older neighbors -- remove breeding sites on their properties.*

Some garden or hardware centers carry a product called Mosquito Dunk® that contains a larvicide --*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (BTI)-- for use in areas of standing water around the home. More importantly, however, homeowners and renters should eliminate standing water around the home to reduce breeding sites for mosquitoes -- direct handling of larvicides may cause skin and eye irritation. If these products are purchased for home use, public health officials recommend careful reading of the hazards label, directions for use, and details regarding storage and handling.

For more information about the prevention of West Nile virus and mosquitoes, contact your local public health agency or visit the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' website at [www.dhss.state.mo.us/WestNileVirus/](http://www.dhss.state.mo.us/WestNileVirus/).

Adapted from materials developed by the New York City and Springfield - Greene (Missouri) County Depts. of Health.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services



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