

# West Nile Virus

## What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus can be a serious, even fatal, illness. It can affect people, horses, certain types of birds, and other animals.

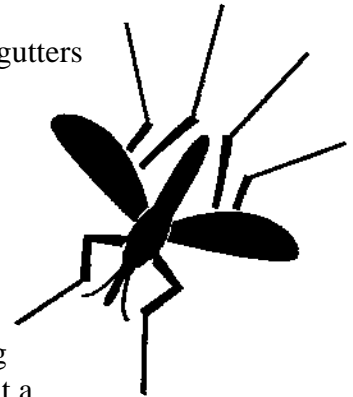
## How is it spread?

West Nile Virus is almost always spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected after feeding on birds that carry the virus. There is no evidence that West Nile Virus can be spread by direct contact with infected people or animals.

## How can I protect myself?

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to avoid mosquito bites and reduce the places mosquito live and breed around your home. Take these steps:

- Empty anything that holds standing water. Mosquitoes, which spread West Nile Virus when they bite, need water to breed and grow.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly, and clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.
- Fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.
- Make sure window and door screens are “bug tight.”
- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active. When outside, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat. (Before laying eggs, mosquitoes seek out a meal from a bird, dog, horse or humans.)
- Repellents containing DEET are effective. Take special care when using repellents on children.



*Source: Washington State Department of Health.*

For more information visit the State Department of Health’s web site at [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp) and click on West Nile Virus, the Snohomish Health District’s web site at [www.snohd.org](http://www.snohd.org), or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s web site at [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid) and click on West Nile Virus.