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# M.I.E.C.M.



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Health Canada  
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BC Centre for Disease Control  
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## Contacts

## Information

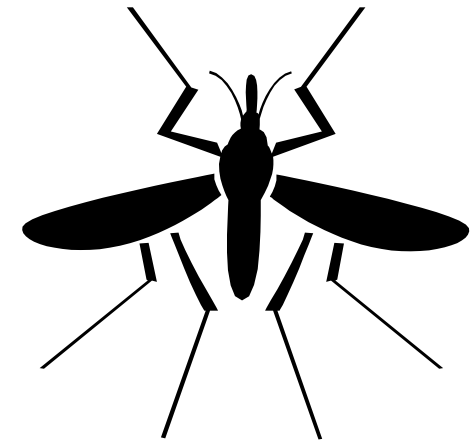
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# WNV West Nile Virus

Information from  
the  
M.I.E.C.M.



The Facts  
Protect Your Community  
Most Common Questions  
Personal Protection  
Pest Management

This package is a compilation of WNV information from Health Canada, The BC Centre for Disease Control and the Vancouver Island Health Authority and is provided by the Mid-Island Emergency Coordinators and Managers (M.I.E.C.M.)

**Working together for the mid-Island since 1998**

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## West Nile Virus (WNV) (The Facts)

### What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus belongs to a family of viruses called Flaviviridae. It is spread by mosquitoes that have fed on the blood of infected birds. West Nile virus is closely related to the viruses that cause Dengue fever, Yellow fever and St. Louis encephalitis.

### Where did West Nile virus come from?

The virus was first isolated in 1937 in the West Nile district of Uganda. Since then, there have been outbreaks in Egypt, Israel, South Africa and in parts of Europe, Asia & North America. The first recorded outbreak in North America happened in New York in 1999.

### How do people get infected with WNV?

Evidence shows that most people infected with WNV got it from the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito becomes infected when it feeds on the blood of a bird that is infected with the virus. About 2 weeks later the mosquito becomes capable of passing the virus to people and animals by biting them.



### When is the risk greatest?

The risk of becoming infected is greatest during mosquito season. In Canada this can start as early as mid-April and last until the first hard frost in late September or October.

### Putting it in Perspective:

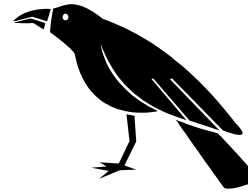
**Most people (80%) who become infected will experience no symptoms at all, 20% will show light symptoms (elevated temperature, swelling to upper respiratory system) and 1% will show more serious symptoms.**

**In other words: For a population of 100,000; 2,600 people may be infected; 546 may show light symptoms and 11 people may show more serious symptoms.**

## (WNV)(Programs)

### The Birds

In Nature, WNV exists in a cycle passing between birds of the Corvid family, Crows, Jays and Magpies and include, in BC, the American and Northwestern Crow and the Common Raven; the Gray, Steller's and Blue Jays and the Black-billed Magpie.



### Surveillance

Bird species that have been identified as amplification reservoirs for WNV and other arboviruses are part of a collection program for testing in BC. A system of arbovirus response levels is used to classify and assess risk based on the current level of identification in any region. The response levels will vary by geographic area, time and specific arbovirus.

Municipalities may have programs for collection of dead birds, from municipal property, which may require testing for WNV.

Dead birds which are found on private property will not necessarily be part of the surveillance program and should be disposed of in a safe manner without touching the bird.

### Pest Control

Some municipalities, where a problem has been identified, have mosquito control programs in place. Other programs, useful to mosquito abatement, are with the use of pesticides, insecticides and adulticides. These applications **MUST** be done with caution and in conjunction with integrated pest management programs obtained through the BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection.

### Environmental

Rain Barrel Programs have been instituted by some municipalities as part of water conservation programs. Accompanying this initiative should be comprehensive information educating the public in the proper use of rain barrels, complete with protective mesh screening, which controls the escape of hatching mosquito larvae.

### Education

It is important that all levels of government disseminate complete and accurate information so as to allow the public to make informed decisions to control from WNV spread.

## Community & Personal Protection

You and your neighbours can do several things to prevent mosquitoes from breeding near your homes and also protect yourself from mosquito bites.

### Eliminate Mosquito Breeding Sites:

Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water and it takes about four days for the eggs to grow into adults that are ready to fly. Even a small amount of water, for example, in a saucer under a flowerpot is enough to act as a breeding ground. As a result, it is important to eliminate as much standing water around your property as possible. Birdbaths, pet bowls, uncovered rain barrels and gutters are areas that can trap standing water.

### Minimize your exposure to mosquitoes:

- When going outdoors, use insect repellents that contain DEET or other approved ingredients.
- Try to avoid spending time outdoors at dawn and at dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants and a hat. Light coloured clothing is best because mosquitoes tend to be more attracted to dark colours.
- Make sure that door and window screens fit tightly and have no holes that may allow mosquitoes indoors.
- For information concerning animals consult your local veterinarian

### About Using Pesticides?

Regarding the use of pesticides, only workers who are licensed by provincial authorities and are trained in the safe use of pesticides can carry out mosquito control programs. Decisions on pest control to prevent the spread of WNV in your community will be made by local and provincial authorities.



*Pesticide Use*