

Outdoor activities increase your risk of mosquito bites

- Golf
 - Hiking
 - Fishing
 - Camping
 - Soccer
 - Football
 - Picnics
 - Hunting
 - Bike riding
 - Porch-sitting
 - Skating
 - Rollerblading
 - Strolling
 - Boating
 - Gardening
 - Yard care
 - Dog walking
 - Jogging
 - Barbecuing
- Fight the bite while you are outside.**

What about dead birds?

West Nile virus can make some birds sick. If you find a dead crow, jay, magpie, raven, or hawk from June through October, please report the bird to the health department.

Birds without trauma or decay may be able to be tested for the virus. Birds that do not meet testing criteria will not be picked up by the health department. Although West Nile virus is not spread by dead birds, do not handle a dead bird with your bare hands. Use a shovel, gloves, or a plastic bag to handle the bird, place it in a plastic bag, and then throw it away in the outside trash.

What about horses? Most horses bitten by mosquitoes will not become ill. However, horses that do become sick may have severe symptoms that include tremors, weakness, inability to stand, stumbling, and death. A vaccine and annual booster to prevent West Nile virus infection in horses is available. Check with your veterinarian for more information.

What about dogs and cats? Dogs and cats can also catch West Nile from mosquitoes. Like people, dogs and cats rarely become ill from the virus. Insect repellents used for people are usually not approved for use on pets because pets tend to ingest repellents while licking. Contact your veterinarian if you have any questions.

For More Information

**Benton-Franklin Health District
Environmental Health Division**

7102 West Okanogan Place
Kennewick, WA 99336

www.bfhd.wa.gov

Reporting dead birds:

www.bfhd.wa.gov/wnv
509.460.HAWK (4295)

Twitter:

www.twitter.com/BiterFighter

Human health

Washington State Department of Health
West Nile Virus in Washington
1.866.78VIRUS

www.doh.wa.gov/wnv

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm

Local Mosquito Information & Prevention

Benton County Mosquito Control District

www.mosquitocontrol.org

Franklin County Mosquito Control District

www.fcncd.org

Horse Information

Washington State University Extension
5600-E West Canal Place
Kennewick, WA 99336
509.735-3551

Washington State Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.wa.gov>

A related BFHD brochure is available:

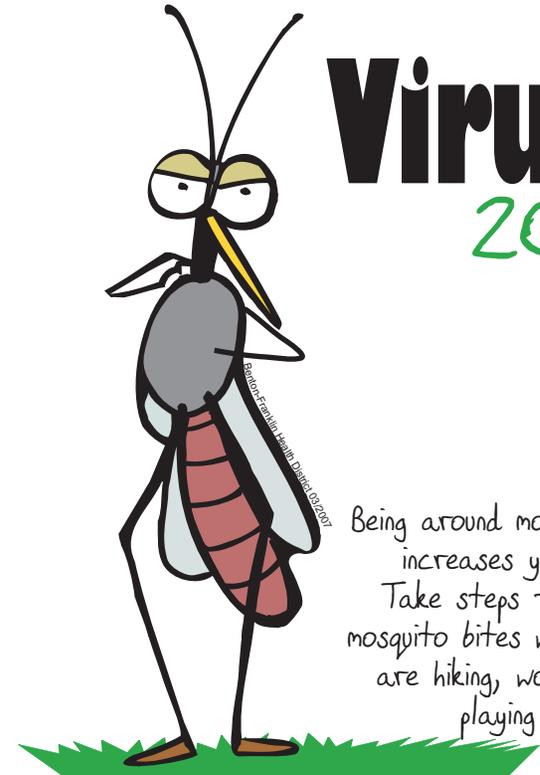
[Bite Back: Using Insect Repellents](#)

BFHD-E-0029 05/2011

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Outdoor Safety Series

West Nile Virus 2011



Being around mosquitoes increases your risk. Take steps to avoid mosquito bites while you are hiking, working or playing outside.

www.bfhd.wa.gov



What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus can cause illness in birds and is spread by mosquito bites. If the mosquito bites a bird with a high level of the virus, the mosquito can become infected and spread West Nile to other animals, including people. The virus activity changes from year to year. In 2009, over 35 people infected with the virus were reported in Washington. In 2010, two human cases were reported in the state.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus

Most people with West Nile virus will not have symptoms. However, about 20% of people bitten by an infected mosquito may become ill.

If they appear, symptoms of West Nile fever usually begin 2 to 15 days after the mosquito bite and include:

- fever
- headache and body aches
- skin rash
- fatigue and weakness

About 1% of the people infected with West Nile virus may have more severe symptoms such as high fever, neck stiffness, disorientation, tremors, vision loss, numbness, paralysis, and coma. Symptoms may last several weeks and may cause permanent damage to the nervous system.

Although most people completely recover from West Nile virus infection, the illness has caused ongoing health problems or death in others. There is no specific treatment for the infection and no human vaccine. Call your health care provider if you have questions.

Practice the SIX Ds to Prevent West Nile Virus Infection

Don't give mosquitoes a home...

To help protect yourself and others from West Nile virus, **DRAIN** standing water around your yard so mosquitoes will not have a place to lay their eggs.

- Change water in birdbaths, flower pots, and animal troughs weekly.
- Remove used tires from your property. Tires hold warm water, perfect for rapid mosquito growth.
- Check boat and pool covers and tarps to make sure they don't trap water.
- Fix leaking outdoor faucets and make sure roof gutters drain.
- Flip over unused toys, buckets, wheelbarrows, pails, and other containers in the yard to make sure they aren't storing water.



Drain



Dusk & Dawn



Dress



Defend



Decide

DEFEND your home by fixing or replacing door and window screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house. If the screen cannot be fixed, keep the door or window closed—especially after dusk when mosquitoes are active.

If you're going camping, make sure the screens in your tent are free of rips and tears. A bug net may also be used over a baby stroller while going on outdoor walks during the mosquito season. In our area, mosquito season usually runs from March through October.

Avoid mosquito bites...

At night, when hot summer temperatures become more comfortable and the humidity increases, mosquitoes become more active. Avoid being outside between **DUSK** and **DAWN** when mosquitoes are more likely to be around. Mosquitoes also like shady areas that are protected from the wind.

DRESS with a hat, long sleeves, and long pants to keep your skin covered to prevent mosquito bites.

If you are outside while mosquitoes are biting, your final defense is to wear insect repellent. Repellents make you unattractive to mosquitoes; they do not kill them. **DECIDE** which insect repellent is right for you and your family. **Four effective repellent ingredients are recommended:**

- **DEET**
- **picaridin**
- **oil of lemon eucalyptus**
- **IR3535**

Be sure to read the directions for the repellent that you choose. Most repellents should only be put on exposed skin, should be washed off when you come inside, and should not be put on your eyes, ears, or mouth.