



West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes when they bite an infected bird, and then bite a person. Eighty percent of infected people show no signs of the disease and up to 20 percent have relatively mild, flu-like symptoms. One in 150 people infected develop severe, potentially fatal illness as the virus enters their nervous system. Symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, muscle weakness and paralysis. Persons who become ill develop symptoms three to 14 days after infection.

While the number of cases of West Nile Virus has been low in the Pacific Northwest the virus is known to be present in birds and it is of potential concern. It is worth taking some simple precautions to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds.

Mosquito Facts: Mosquitoes need water. They have four stages of development (egg, larva, pupa and adult) and spend their larval and pupal stages in water. Both male and female adults are nectar feeders, but the female is also capable of drinking blood. Only the female can bite and during feeding she injects saliva. Female mosquitoes hunt their blood host by detecting carbon dioxide. They are also attracted by perspiration, warmth, body odor and light. The mosquito's period of feeding is often undetected; the bite only becomes apparent because of the immune reaction it provokes. Mosquitoes are a vector agent that carries disease-causing viruses and parasites from person to person without catching the disease themselves. Mosquitoes are estimated to transmit disease to more than 700 million people in the world annually with millions of resulting deaths.

Steps to Help Prevent Mosquitoes: Empty children's wading pools when not in use, tip out water from barrels, buckets and wheelbarrows. Clean garden ponds, change water in birdbaths. Cover rain barrels with mosquito screens. Recycle old bottles and cans. Clean leaf-clogged gutters and repair leaky outdoor faucets. Add screens to doors and windows that are left open. Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when outside and use DEET insect repellent when you will be exposed.

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