

West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) is one of the most common mosquito-borne diseases that people have contracted in Ohio. This is not a new virus! Cases do occur in Ohio, but most of the cases in humans are found to occur in the northern and western parts of the state. WNV is passed to humans when they are bitten by an infected mosquito that has eaten a blood meal from an animal that was infected with the disease, so it is always important to follow preventative actions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

How are animals affected by West Nile Virus?

Birds are natural carriers of the virus, and if a mosquito bites a bird that is carrying the virus then that mosquito has the potential to transmit the virus to a human.

Horses have been found to be a stopping point for the virus. When a horse contracts WNV, they cannot pass it on to other mammals, but the horse can become ill from the virus. Preventative vaccinations are available for horses to prevent them from catching WNV.

A mosquito's primary source of WNV is through taking a blood meal from birds, but other means of contracting the disease are possible. A female mosquito can also pass WNV to her eggs, resulting in her offspring also having the virus.

Can my dog or cat get West Nile Virus?

Yes! If your pet is bitten by an infected mosquito, there is a possibility that they can also contract WNV. This is important to consider when taking your pets outside, and you should make sure to minimize their exposure to mosquitoes.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus

Eighty percent of people who get WNV do not show any symptoms, but there is no way to know if an individual will show symptoms if they catch the virus. Of the 20 percent that do show symptoms, they can experience the following symptoms and more:

- Fever
- Headache
- Body aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting

If you have recently been bitten by a mosquito and are experiencing any of the above symptoms, you should contact your medical provider immediately.

Meigs County Health Department Mosquito Kits

The health department provides FREE mosquito kits with different forms of repellent, information packets, larvicide, and more that can be picked up by request!

More Resources about West Nile Virus:

ODOH: West Nile Virus: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/zoonotic-disease-program/resources/west-nile-virus>

CDC: West Nile Virus – Symptoms, Diagnosis, and Treatment:
<https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/symptoms/index.html>

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