

## West Nile Virus – Fact Sheet

- The West Nile Virus is a potentially serious illness caused by the bite of infected mosquitoes that carry the disease from infected birds.
- Not all mosquitoes carry the West Nile Virus and only an infected mosquito can cause illness.
- Four out of every 5 people infected with the West Nile Virus will not develop any type of illness.
- Only about 20% of people who become infected with the West Nile Virus will develop West Nile Fever.
- Symptoms of West Nile Fever are headache, tiredness, body aches, and on occasion, a skin rash and swollen lymph glands.
- Approximately 1 in 150 people infected with the West Nile Virus will develop a more severe form of the disease such as Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or Meningitis (inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal chord).
- Symptoms of severe West Nile Disease include headache, high fever, stiff neck, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis.
- Although there is no vaccine or treatment for the West Nile Virus, anyone with symptoms of severe West Nile Disease should immediately seek medical attention.
- Serious illness can occur in anyone, however, people 50 or older or people with weakened immune systems are at the greatest risk of getting severely ill when infected with the West Nile Virus.
- West Nile Virus is not spread through casual contact such as touching or kissing a person with the virus.
- The greatest risk of getting the West Nile Virus is during July, August and September.
- The best way to avoid the West Nile Virus is to prevent mosquito bites by using insect repellent with DEET, wearing protective clothing, eliminating standing water and repairing window screens.
- In 2009, WNV has been detected in mosquito pools in Columbus and Franklin County.
- Columbus recorded no human cases in 2007 and 2008, and one case in 2006. Ohio has recorded human cases of WNV each year since 2002 when there were 441 cases. There were 108 in 2003, 12 in 2004, 61 in 2005, 48 in 2006 and 23 in 2007.

### For more information on West Nile Virus:

[www.pubichealth.columbus.gov](http://www.pubichealth.columbus.gov)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)