

## Other prevention tips

- Keep gutters clean and in good repair.
- Keep weeds and grass cut short.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Loose-fitting, light-colored clothing is best.
- Protect babies and small children by using mosquito netting over strollers.

For more West Nile prevention tips, including how to properly apply insect repellent, scan the QR code below.



## About Us

Cook County Department of Public Health, an affiliate of Cook County Health, is a nationally accredited, state-certified local health department serving suburban Cook County. We build healthier, more equitable communities by protecting health, preventing disease, engaging communities, and analyzing and sharing data for action.

### For more information

**Cook County Department of Public Health**

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org>



# FIGHT THE BITE



## PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS

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**PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS**

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**BUILDING  
HEALTHIER  
COMMUNITIES**

## What is West Nile virus?

West Nile virus is an infection carried by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected with West Nile virus when they feed on infected birds that carry the virus in their blood.

Once infected, the mosquito can spread the virus to humans and other animals.

## Who can become infected?

Anybody can become infected with West Nile virus; so it's important to protect yourself from mosquito bites. People over the age of 50 and those with chronic diseases, such as heart disease or cancer, may be more at-risk for serious illness. Most human cases occur in late summer and early fall.

## What are the symptoms?

Most people infected with West Nile virus have no symptoms and never become ill. Some people may become ill three to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms may include fever, headache, rash and body aches. More severe symptoms may be a high fever, stiff neck, confusion, muscle weakness and inflammation of the brain. The inflammation could lead to permanent neurological damage and death.

## How is it treated?

No specific treatment or vaccine for West Nile virus exists. In severe cases, hospitalization may be necessary. If you believe you may have been infected, call your doctor.

# PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS

### APPLY INSECT REPELLENT

- Use EPA-registered repellents to keep mosquitoes away.
- **On adults:** Use repellents containing 20% to 50% DEET, or choose picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- **On children:** Use child-safe repellents with 20% to 30% DEET.
  - **Do not** use repellents containing oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol on children younger than three years old.
  - **Do not** apply repellent on babies younger than two months old.
- For tips on the proper way to apply bug repellent, scan the QR code on the back of this brochure.

### DRAIN STANDING WATER

Don't allow mosquitoes to breed!

- Check the outside of your home and get rid of any items that may hold water such as old tires, flower pots, buckets or bottles.
- Empty plastic wading pools twice weekly. Store inside when not in use.
- Store boats covered or upside down.
- Water bowls for pets should be emptied and refilled daily.

### REPAIR TORN SCREENS

- Be sure screens in homes are in good repair and tight-fitting without gaps.

### BEWARE DURING DUSK & DAWN

- Limit time outdoors when mosquito activity is heaviest (dusk to dawn).

