

Toolkit

Sharable information about West Nile virus.

FIGHT THE BITE



PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS



Cook County DEPT. of
Public Health

BUILDING
HEALTHIER
COMMUNITIES



Introduction

West Nile virus season has arrived in Cook County. To help keep residents informed and safe, we've developed this communications toolkit to support public awareness and education efforts. West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne disease that spreads to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. While many people who become infected experience mild or no symptoms, in some cases, the illness can lead to severe complications or even be fatal. This toolkit provides key messages, graphics, and resources to help partners and community organizations share accurate information and promote prevention steps to reduce the risk of infection.

How can I help spread the word?

Whether you're an individual, a community leader, or an organization, you can make a difference by sharing trusted information with your networks. This toolkit provides:

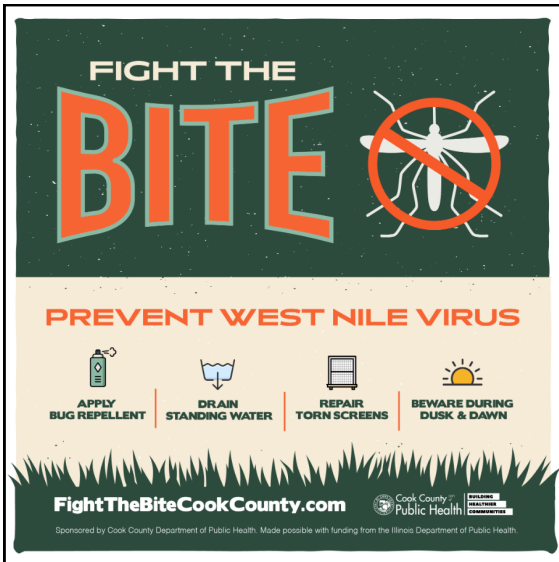
- Ready-to-use graphics & captions
- Sample social post carousel
- Links to helpful websites
- Videos
- Poster
- Palm cards
- Brochure
- Sample article

Tag CCDPH

- Facebook – www.facebook.com/ccdph
 - @CCDPH or @Cook County Department of Public Health
- X (formerly Twitter) – www.x.com/cookcohealth
 - @cookcohealth
- LinkedIn – www.linkedin.com/company/cook-county-department-of-public-health/
 - @Cook County Department of Public Health
- Instagram - www.instagram.com/cookcountypublichealth
 - @cookcountypublichealth



Sample Social Media Posts



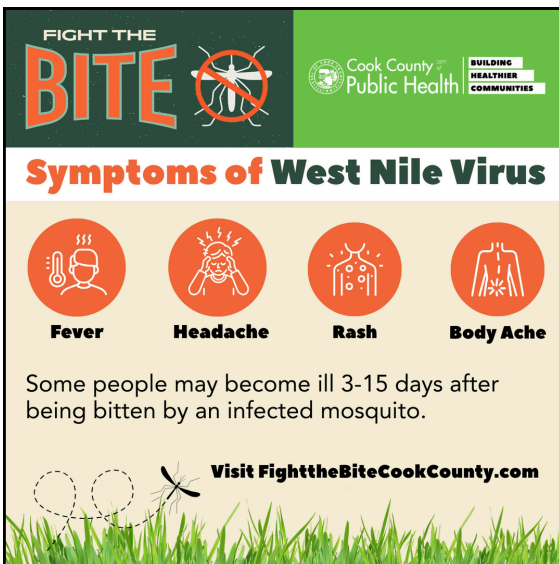
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Sample caption:

West Nile virus is spread by mosquitoes and can cause serious illness. Protect yourself and your loved ones this summer with a few simple steps:

- Use EPA-registered insect repellent.
- Remove standing water around your home.
- Fix or replace broken window screens.
- Stay indoors during dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

Learn more at FightTheBiteCookCounty.com



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Sample caption:

West Nile virus can cause a range of symptoms, from fever and body aches to more serious complications like swelling of the brain or nervous system. If you were exposed to mosquitos and develop symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, or confusion, seek medical care right away.

Learn more at FightTheBiteCookCounty.com



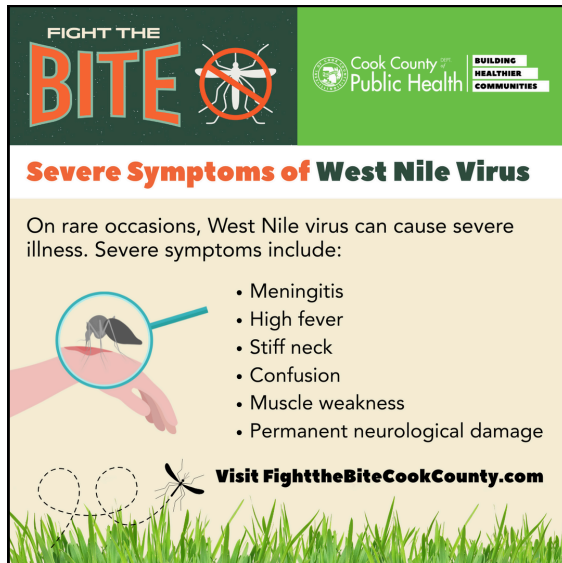
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Sample caption:

Using insect repellent correctly is one of the best ways to protect yourself from mosquito bites and West Nile virus. Make sure to follow safety tips when applying repellent, especially for children. Protect your skin, prevent bites, and enjoy the outdoors safely this summer.

[Learn more on how to apply insect repellent here.](#)

Sample Social Media Posts



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Sample caption:

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne illness that can cause serious health problems. While severe symptoms are rare, they can require immediate medical attention. Protect yourself by applying bug repellent appropriately, draining standing water, repairing torn screens, and staying alert this summer.

Learn more at FightTheBiteCookCounty.com



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Sample caption:

Anyone can get West Nile virus, but some people are more vulnerable to severe illness. Older adults and individuals with certain health conditions are at higher risk for complications. Understanding your risk is an important part of staying safe this summer.

Learn more at FightTheBiteCookCounty.com



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Sample caption:

Standing water creates the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes that can spread West Nile virus. Check around your home and yard regularly to empty items that collect water, like buckets, flowerpots, and wading pools. Every small step helps reduce your risk.

Learn more at FightTheBiteCookCounty.com

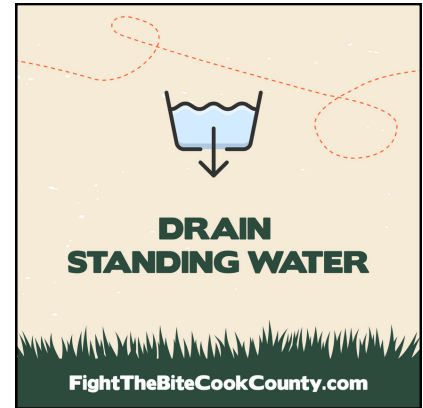
Sample Social Media Post Carousel



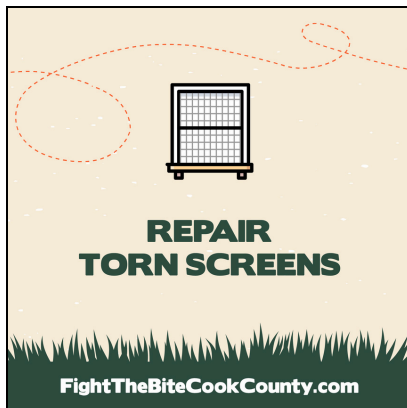
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Sample Carousel Post Caption

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne illness that can lead to serious health problems. Protect yourself and your family by taking simple prevention steps this summer:

- (1) Apply EPA-registered insect repellent.
- (2) Drain standing water around your home.
- (3) Repair torn window screens.
- (4) Limit time outdoors at dawn and dusk.

Learn more: [FightTheBiteCookCounty.com](https://fightthebitecookcounty.com)

Hashtags

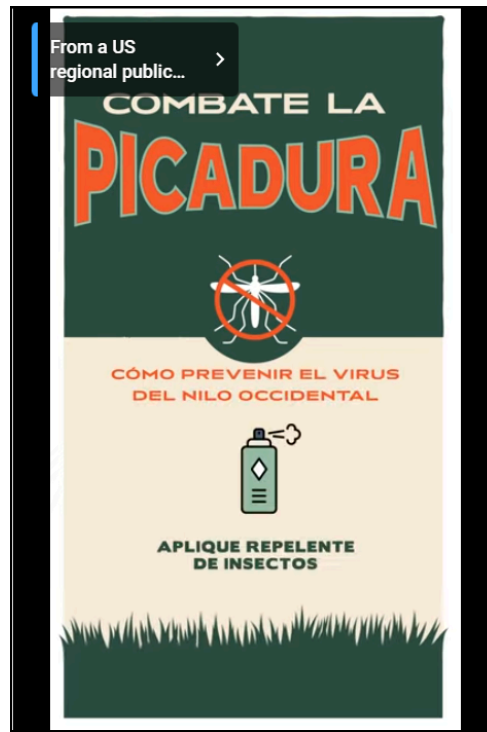
#FightTheBite	#MosquitoControl
#WestNileVirus	#SummerSafety
#MosquitoPrevention	#HealthySummer
#PreventMosquitoBites	#DiseasePrevention

Videos

Animated Videos



[Access the video in English.](#)



[Access the video in Spanish.](#)

2014 Testimonial from West Nile Survivor

Hear from former Evergreen Park Mayor James Sexton talk about his West Nile virus symptoms and recovery.



[Access the video here.](#)

Brochure

This 8.5" x 11" brochure provides information about West Nile virus, including how it spreads, who is at higher risk, symptoms to watch for, available treatment options, and simple steps to help prevent mosquito bites and reduce the risk of infection.

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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>



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PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS
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FIGHT THE BITE



PREVENT WEST NILE VIRUS

FightTheBiteCookCounty.com



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).

Poster: 4 Things You Can Do to Prevent West Nile Virus

This 11x17 poster includes simple steps to help prevent West Nile virus. It explains how to protect yourself and your family by using insect repellent, removing standing water, repairing window screens, and limiting outdoor activity during peak mosquito hours.

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Palm Card

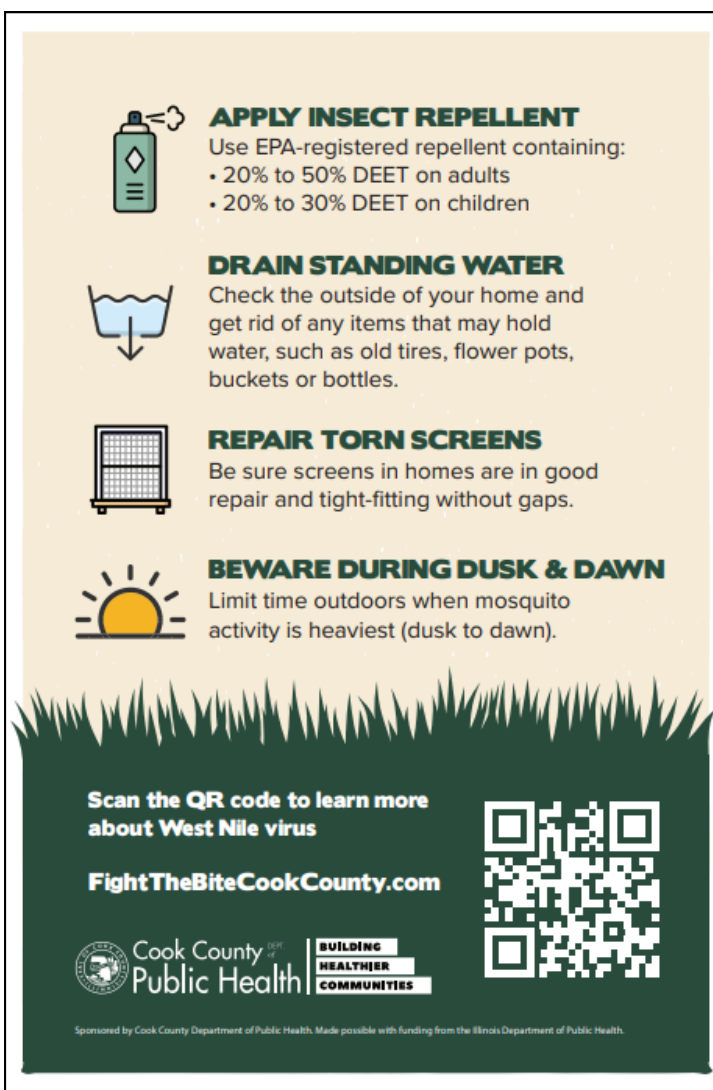
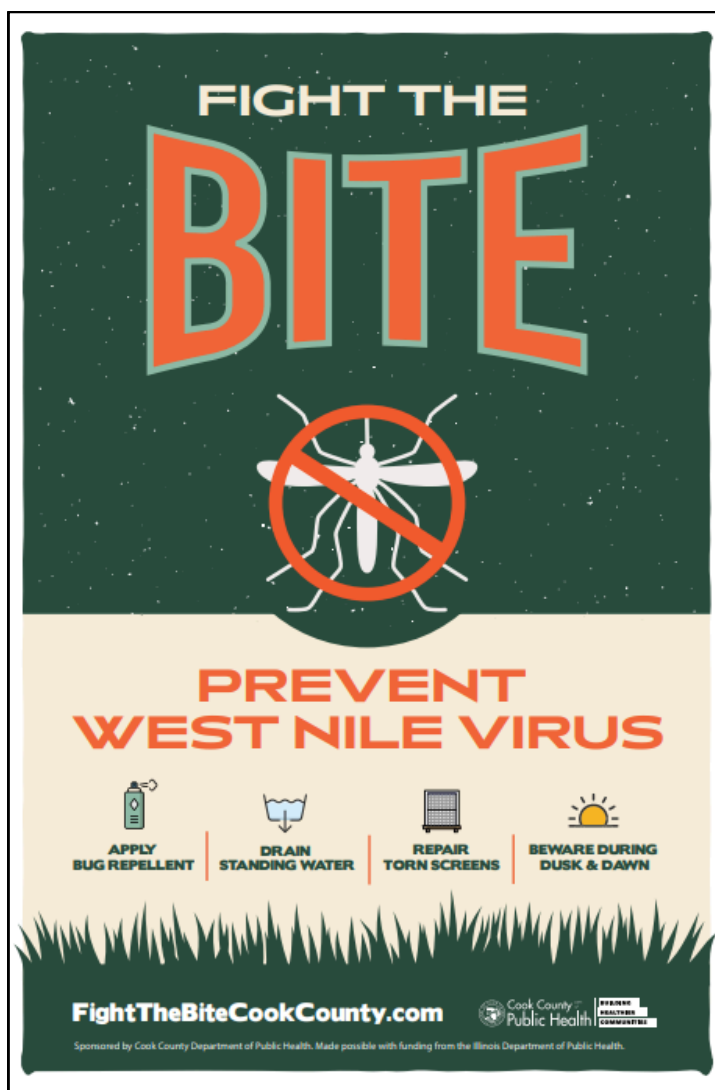
This 5x7 double-sided palm card provides quick tips to help prevent West Nile virus. One side includes simple prevention steps, while the other offers additional information to help you reduce mosquito exposure and protect your health.

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Sample Article to Share (under 500 words)

Fight the Bite: Cook County Department of Public Health Urges Residents to Protect Against West Nile Virus

As summer temperatures rise, so does the risk of West Nile virus (WNV), a mosquito-borne illness that can lead to serious health complications. Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) is encouraging residents to take preventive actions to reduce their risk of infection and limit the spread of the virus in the community.

West Nile virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. These mosquitoes become infected after feeding on birds carrying the virus. Many people who contract WNV experience no symptoms, but some may develop fever, headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, or rash.

In severe cases, WNV can lead to neurological conditions such as encephalitis or meningitis, which can be life-threatening, especially for older adults and individuals with weakened immune systems.

Residents are encouraged to take the following precautions:

(1) Apply EPA-registered insect repellent to keep mosquitoes away.

A repellent containing 20% to 50% DEET is good for adults, and a child-friendly repellent with 20% to 30% DEET is sufficient for children.

(2) Drain standing water around your home.

That includes flowerpots, old tires, buckets and plastic wading pools.

(3) Repair torn window screens.

Screens should be tight-fitting without gaps.

(4) Beware during dusk and dawn, when mosquito activity is heaviest.

Limit time outdoors during this period.

For more information on West Nile virus prevention and to stay updated on local mosquito activity, visit FightTheBiteCookCounty.com.