

Personal Protection Against Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

West Nile virus (WNV) is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. If infected, most people experience only mild symptoms like headache, fever, rash and swollen glands lasting a week or less. However, a small percentage of people can develop serious neurological symptoms like severe headaches, stiff neck, disorientation, and encephalitis (swelling of the brain) or meningitis (swelling of the lining of the brain and spinal cord). Young children and elderly persons are at higher risk for more serious symptoms.



Anyone can protect themselves, their families and children or elderly people in their care by taking some simple precautions when spending time outdoors.

- Limit time outdoors when mosquitoes are most active - from May to September, especially between dusk and dawn.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long sleeves, and shoes and socks, at times and in areas where mosquito activity is high. Light-coloured clothing is better than dark as mosquitoes are attracted to dark, intense colours.
- Use an insect repellent containing DEET or Icaridin on exposed skin, when and where mosquitoes are active. Permethrin-treated clothing is also effective.
- Ensure that windows and doors are screened and that the screens are in good repair to prevent mosquitoes from accessing your workplace or home.
- Remove any areas of standing water around your home and work environment. Empty water from bird baths, wading pools, children's toys, planters and pots, wheel barrows, etc., every few days and especially after a heavy rainfall.
- Maintain swimming pools, hot tubs, and ornamental ponds between May and September.

For more information about mosquitoes and West Nile virus call the Durham Health Connection Line at 1-800-841-2729 or go to <https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/west-nile-virus.aspx>.

For more information about insect repellents visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/about-pesticides/insect-repellents.html>.



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