



Manitowoc County Health Department

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First Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported in Manitowoc County This Year

Continue to Prevent Mosquito Bites

Manitowoc, WI— Local health officials are advising residents to continue to protect themselves against mosquito bites as they announce this year's first human case of [West Nile virus \(WNV\)](#) in a resident of Manitowoc County. Several other people with WNV illness have been reported in the state this year. [WNV activity](#) has also previously been detected in animals, mosquitoes, and healthy blood donors whose blood screened positive for WNV.

West Nile virus is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito and is not spread from person to person. Mosquitoes get the virus by feeding on infected birds.

WNV illness is most common in Wisconsin during the months of August and September. However, the risk of contracting WNV and other mosquito-borne illnesses such as [Jamestown Canyon virus](#), [La Crosse encephalitis virus](#), or [eastern equine encephalitis virus](#), is present anytime mosquitoes are active, so it is important for people to be vigilant about preventing mosquito bites throughout the rest of the summer and into early fall.

Most people (80%) who are infected with WNV do not get sick. Those who do become ill usually experience mild symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle ache, rash, and fatigue. However, some people (less than 1%) who become infected with the virus get seriously ill with symptoms that include high fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, disorientation, mental confusion, tremors, confusion, paralysis, and coma. Older adults and those with compromised immune systems are at greater risk of developing severe illness that can be fatal. It is important that people contact a health care provider if they suspect they have WNV illness.

The best way to avoid illnesses spread by mosquitoes is to reduce exposure to mosquitoes and eliminate mosquito breeding sites. Mosquitoes will no longer be active once there is a hard frost (temperatures below 28 degrees for at least four consecutive hours), but until then, people are urged to protect themselves. The Manitowoc County Health Department recommends the following:

Mission: "To protect and promote the health of Manitowoc County in partnership with our community"



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Avoid Mosquito Bites

- Apply an insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 to exposed skin and clothing.
- Prior to heading outdoors, treat clothing with permethrin; do not apply permethrin directly to skin.
- Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning hours, when mosquitoes that spread WNV are most active.
- Wear loose-fitting long-sleeves and long pants when outdoors to help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- Make sure window and door screens are intact and tightly-fitted to prevent mosquitoes from getting into your home.
- Prevent mosquitoes from breeding around your home by removing stagnant water from items around your property, such as tin cans, plastic containers, flower pots, discarded tires, roof gutters, and downspouts. Turn over wheelbarrows, kiddie pools, buckets, and small boats such as canoes and kayaks when not in use.
- Change the water in bird baths and pet dishes at least every three days.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Trim or mow tall grass, weeds, and vines since mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.