

## Avoid Bites

Avoid mosquito-breeding areas during peak periods of mosquito activity: dusk, dawn and after the rain. Don't forget to:

-  Wear long sleeves and pants
-  Wear closed shoes
-  Avoid damp grassy areas
-  For children two months and older, apply an insect repellent according to label directions

## Dead Bird Sightings

DEP coordinates the collection of dead bird specimens for possible testing. Species of interest include:

-  Crows
-  Blue Jays
-  Birds of Prey: Owls, Hawks, Eagles

If a dead bird is found, please contact the local County WNV Coordinator, or visit [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us). Dead birds can also be reported by calling 717-346-8243.

## Protecting Horses

Horses, like humans, are susceptible to WNV. Other small pets, like cats and dogs, may also contract the virus although it is very rare. There is a vaccine available. Please contact a local veterinarian for more information.



## Mosquito Concerns or Complaints

Infestations of mosquitoes, or standing water causing mosquito breeding can be reported on the WNV website.

For more regarding the DEP WNV program please contact 717-346-8238 or visit [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us)

**County Coordinator:** Karen Tobin

**Phone Number:** 814-451-6749

**Email Address:** [ktobin@eriecountygov.org](mailto:ktobin@eriecountygov.org)



**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

## West Nile Virus Control Program



## Program Overview

In 2000, West Nile virus (WNV) first appeared in Pennsylvania. The PA Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP), Health and Agriculture developed a WNV Control Program. The program's goal is to protect human health by preventing the spread of WNV. DEP focuses its efforts on an environmentally friendly integrated pest management program. The program focuses on education, source reduction and a hierarchical approach of pesticide use. Since 2000, 99 percent of all mosquito control applications have been larval control, which is safe for the environment. When adult mosquitoes pose a risk of infecting people with WNV, chemical pesticides are used to reduce the population. These are effective in controlling mosquito populations and pose little to no harmful effect to humans, plants or other animals.

## WNV Facts

- WNV is a mosquito-borne disease that can, and in rare instances, causes encephalitis, a brain inflammation.
- Mosquitoes acquire the disease from feeding on infected birds and transmit the virus by feeding on the next bird, animal or person.
- This disease is not spread by person-to-person contact and there is no evidence that people can get the virus by handling infected animals.
- One in five people infected will develop a mild infection called West Nile fever; the symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph glands.
- One in 150 persons infected will develop a severe infection called West Nile encephalitis; the symptoms include: high fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness and paralysis.

- Those infected with a mild infection often fully recover in a few days however, symptoms of a severe infection can last several weeks. Neurological effects may be permanent and the infection can be fatal.
- There is no known treatment or vaccine.
- Transmission risk of WNV is greatest from July through September.

## PA History of WNV (since 2000)

- 469 people infected and 28 deaths
- 731 equine cases
- Over 2,700 dead birds found infected
- Over 9,000 infected mosquito samples collected



## Reduce the Risk at Home

Mosquitoes need water to breed. The type of mosquito connected to the transmission of WNV is most commonly found around people and likes stagnant, organic sources of water. Mosquitoes are able to breed in as little as a tablespoon of water. Residents can help by eliminating standing water around their homes.



### **Get rid of items that collect water:**

- Old tires, tin cans, buckets and flowerpots
- Corrugated downspouts and gutters

### **Keep puddles from forming**

- Fill in ruts or low-lying areas
- Repair leaky pipes or outdoor faucets
- Clear drains and gutters of debris
- Eliminate low spots that may collect water on pool covers, grill covers and tarps

### **Stop stagnant water:**

- Change or empty the water in birdbaths and kiddie pools
- Cover trash containers and recycle bins
- Empty drip trays of planters
- Fill in tree holes/stumps with sand

### **In addition, do not forget to:**

- Keep grass cut short and bushes trimmed, reducing daytime resting areas
- Repair windows and screens so mosquitoes cannot enter the home
- Store wheelbarrows upside down

## Home Products

When dumping or draining water sources is not possible, a safe way to treat standing water to kill mosquitoes is the use of *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti). Bti is a naturally occurring bacterium used to kill mosquito larvae. This material is widely available at home improvement stores and can be safely used around the home. Bti can be purchased in small, donut-shaped form, often called "mosquito dunks"; which are useful in small areas of standing water, such as a birdbath or small puddle of water that may gather in a low spot on the property. A granular form of Bti is available, and effective for larger areas, such as backyard ponds. Bti is safe to use and kills only mosquito and black fly "gnat" larvae. It is not harmful to people, pets, aquatic life (such as fish) or plants. Please follow label directions when using any pesticide.

