

Home, Lawn & Garden

Avoiding West Nile virus by cleaning up around your house

(NC)—Mosquito season is here and you should make sure you know what steps to take to protect yourself from West Nile virus.

The best way to keep mosquitoes away is to clean up areas where they like to breed. Unlike birds or other insects, most mosquitoes do not fly very far and tend to stay close to their breeding sites and normal habitat.

Take a look around your house and property and get rid of mosquito-friendly places that would make good breeding sites or resting places for mosquitoes.

Remove any type of standing water at least once a week

- Clean up and empty containers of standing water such as old tires, flower pots, wheelbarrows, barrels, tin cans or small containers like bottle tops.

- Drill holes in the bottoms of used containers so water can't collect.

- Change water in bird baths.

Swimming or wading pools

- Remove water that collects on pool covers.

- Make sure the pool's pump is circulating.

- Turn over wading pools when not in use and regularly remove any water accumulated in the upturned bottom.

Yard and lawn maintenance

- Turn over compost frequently.

- Collect, recycle or mulch lawn cuttings, raked leaves or other decaying debris such as apples or berries that fall from trees.

- Fill in low depressions in lawn areas.

- Clear out dense shrubbery where mosquitoes like to rest.

Check eaves and drains

- Clear leaves and twigs from eavestroughs and gutters throughout the summer.

- Make sure drainage ditches are not clogged.

- Check flat roofs frequently for standing water.

Check windows

- Check windows and door screens for holes and make sure they fit snugly into the frames, so mosquitoes will not get indoors.

What are the symptoms of

West Nile virus?

(NC)—If you have any of the following symptoms, seek medical advice. These may be early symptoms of West Nile virus illness or of many other illnesses.

- fever
- muscle weakness
- stiff neck
- confusion
- severe headache
- sudden sensitivity to light

Extreme swelling or infection at the site of the mosquito bite is another reason to seek medical attention. This may or may not indicate West Nile virus infection.

If you have concerns, consult your physician.

WEST NILE VIRUS FAST FACTS

(NC)—Here are some fast facts about West Nile virus:

- West Nile virus first appeared in Ontario in 2001

- The virus is transmitted by mosquitoes that become infected by feeding on an infected bird

- Four out of five people bitten by an infected mosquito do not show any symptoms

- Of those who show symptoms, most will

experience mild illness including fever, headache, body ache, nausea, vomiting, and a rash on the chest, stomach or back

- About one in 150 people infected will experience serious symptoms including high fever, severe headache, muscle weakness, stiff neck, confusion, tremors, numbness and sudden sensitivity to light

- Symptoms usually develop between two and 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito

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