

## DID YOU KNOW ?



- Birds are the natural hosts of West Nile virus, and it is mainly transmitted to people through the bites of infected mosquitoes.
- West Nile virus can cause a fatal neurological disease in humans.
- Approximately 80% of people who are infected will not show any symptoms.
- In July of 2017, the first case of West Nile virus was identified in a mosquito.
- Vaccines are available for use in horses but not yet available for humans.

★ **NOTE:** Health Canada estimates that fewer than 1% of those infected – about one of every 150 infected people – will develop severe symptoms, and fewer than that will experience life-threatening complications (adults over 50 and those with underlying conditions or weaker immune systems are at greater risk).

## SYMPTOMS

### Mild symptoms (12-15 days after) can include:

- fever
- headache
- body aches
- mild rash
- swollen lymph glands

### Serious symptoms can include:

- rapid onset of severe headache
- high fever
- stiff neck
- nausea or vomiting (sometimes both)
- difficulty swallowing
- drowsiness
- confusion

### Severe symptoms can include:

- loss of consciousness
- lack of coordination
- muscle weakness
- paralysis

## Long-term Effects of West Nile Virus

### Physical effects:

- long-term muscle weakness/paralysis
- tiredness
- headache

### Mental effects:

- confusion
- depression
- problems with concentration/memory loss

### Functional effects:

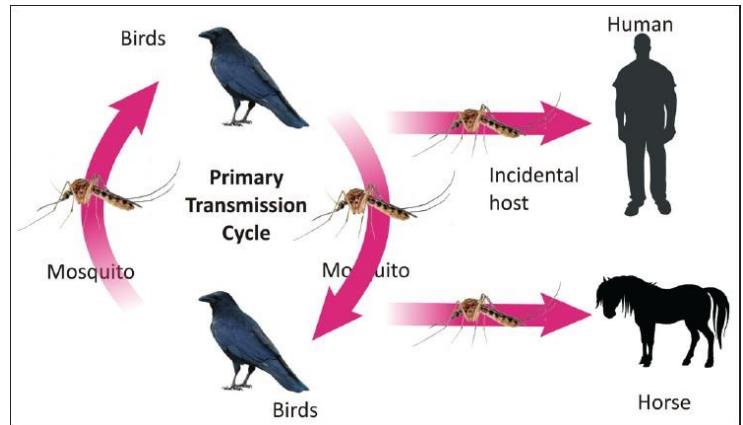
- difficulty with preparing meals
- reduced ability to do outdoor physical activities
- trouble doing daily tasks e.g. shopping



## How is West Nile virus spread?

West Nile virus is usually spread by the bite of a mosquito that has fed on an infected bird. In very rare cases, West Nile virus can be spread through:

- blood transfusion
- organ or tissue transplants
- pregnancy (from mothers to unborn babies)
- breast milk
- exposure to infected medical specimens



## PREVENTION

### ✓ Cover exposed skin

Wear long pants and loose-fitting shirts with long sleeves, socks and a hat and light-coloured clothing.

### ✓ Use insect repellent

Use insect repellents (bug sprays and lotions) that contain the chemicals DEET or Icaridin.

### ✓ Reduce mosquito habitats near your home

Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water (water that does not move or flow). Get rid of standing water around your home by following these tips:

- drain or dry off water in:
  - old tires (even tire swings)
  - rainwater barrels
  - children's toys
  - flowerpots
  - wading pools
- clean eavestroughs to prevent clogs that trap water
- tip fishing boats and gear onto their sides to drain
- replace the water in outdoor pet dishes and bird baths at least 2 times a week
- Put screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out of your home.



SOURCES: Government of Canada, Canada.com, WHO