West Nile virus is a risk you can do something about

West Nile virus is now in most of the United States. The most important way people become infected is through the bite of an infected mosquito. You can reduce your chance of getting infected by avoiding mosquito bites.

Adults are at highest risk. People over age 50 and people who have ever received a solid organ transplant are more likely to develop serious symptoms of West Nile virus if they do get sick and should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.

Apply insect repellent on exposed skin and clothing when you go outdoors. Use an EPA-registered insect repellent such as those containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Permethrin sprayed on clothing provides protection through several washes. Products with a higher percentage of DEET as active ingredient generally give longer. Don’t spray repellent on skin under clothing. Don’t use permethrin on skin.

Cover up! Wearing long sleeve shirts, long pants and socks sprayed with repellent while outdoors can further help prevent mosquito bites.

Avoid mosquitoes! Many mosquitoes bite between dusk and dawn. Limit time outdoors during these hours, or be especially sure to use repellents and protective clothing.

Mosquito-proof your home! Drain standing water. Don’t give mosquitoes a place to breed. A small amount of standing water can be enough for a mosquito to lay eggs. Empty water from buckets, cans, pool covers, flower pots and other items. Throw away or cover up stored tires and other items that aren’t being used. Clean pet water bowls weekly. Check if rain gutters are clogged. If you store water outside or have a well, make sure it’s covered up.

For more information
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