

Please Post

From: Dr. Vanessa Britto, Director of Health Services

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Re: Common Questions about Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

What is West Nile Virus?

It is a viral infection that can, in rare cases, cause serious neurologic disease. It is usually passed from infected birds to mosquitoes who carry it to humans.

How common is West Nile Virus (WNV)

Most people exposed to WNV never have symptoms and it completely resolves on its own. Approximately 2 out of 10 have very mild symptoms 2-14 days after exposure. And very rarely (<1%) exposed people become seriously ill.

In addition to minimizing being outdoors between dusk and dawn, what areas should I particularly avoid?

Try to avoid areas that are damp, wet, shady, and especially those near still or standing water. Mosquitoes don't like the sun and don't like moving or flowing water.

What should I expect if I notice mosquito bites?

Protection against mosquito bites is the best defense. The chances are that your mosquito bites will resolve without a problem and you will not become ill. Apply a cool compress to them, keep your skin clean, try to avoid scratching, and, if necessary, apply topical antihistamine or over the counter hydrocortisone cream. Also, please purchase a thermometer for your future use, if you don't already have one.

When should I be concerned?

Several days after being bitten, if you develop a fever (please use a thermometer to assess this), headache, stiff neck, rash, or fatigue, please contact the Health Service by calling **781-283-2810** or seek medical attention by consulting a physician or hospital if you are away from campus.

For how long will the risk for WNV or EEE last?

The risk for WNV or EEE could last until the area experiences a "hard frost" in mid-late October. Mosquito larvae will then no longer survive.

Who should I call if I have a clinical question?

If you have a clinical question or concern, please contact the Health Service at **781-283-2810**.

See the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA- DPH) West Nile Virus Fact Sheets for additional information.