



West Nile virus Fact Sheet



As Spring and Summer approaches and temperatures begin to rise, mosquitoes will begin to pester you! Before the mosquito season takes off, the Lancaster - Lebanon Mosquito-Borne Disease Prevention Program wanted to provide residents with information about West Nile virus (WNV).

WNV is a mosquito-borne virus that was first detected in Pennsylvania in 2000, with the first cases detected on Lancaster County in 2001. The virus is endemic (found every year) in the County's bird populations and can be spread to humans and horses via mosquitoes. Most people infected with WNV experience no symptoms or mild symptoms. In less than 1% of infections (1 in 150) symptoms can be severe and can include fever, headache, neck stiffness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and possibly death.

The mosquitoes that transmit WNV (*Culex pipiens*) are small, brown mosquitoes that feed primarily from dusk until dawn. Day-biting mosquitoes (such as Asian Tiger Mosquitos) are not typically associated with WNV. Long sleeves, long pants, and approved repellents are all effective ways to help prevent mosquito bites. The CDC recommends repellents that contain either of the following ingredients: DEET, permethrin, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. Additionally, strong fans that blow in the opposite direction when you lounge outside may reduce the number of mosquitoes that bite you.

Mosquitos need only a bottle-cap of water to breed and are weak flyers. If they are biting you around your yard, they are most likely breeding there or at a neighboring property. Emptying water from containers (including clogged gutters, tarps, and wheelbarrows) every week, changing water in bird baths or kiddie pools every one to two weeks, and treating areas of standing water with a larvicide every month can be effective to reduce mosquito habitat around your home. Mosquito Dunks are safe and effective larvicides sold in most home improvements stores and can kill mosquito larvae in standing water that cannot be removed. Always follow the product label.

The Lancaster - Lebanon Mosquito-Borne Disease Prevention Program conducts WNV monitoring in the surrounding community and works to control mosquito populations and breeding habitat. If you see their technicians setting mosquito traps be sure to say hello! For more information about the Lancaster-Lebanon County WNV program please visit www.lccd.org/mosquitoborne-disease-program.