
West Nile Virus

What is West Nile virus?

West Nile virus was first discovered in the U.S. in 1999 in the New York City area of Queens. West Nile virus is a virus that lives in some birds and may be transmitted to people or other animals by mosquitoes. Most healthy people do not get sick. The virus can also cause a broad variety of symptoms including encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord); encephalitis and meningitis can also be caused by head injury, bacterial infections, or more commonly other viral infections.

How do people get the virus?

West Nile virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. When a mosquito bites an infected bird, the mosquito can become infected. West Nile virus is not spread by person-to-person contact such as touching, kissing, or caring for someone who is infected.

Can you get West Nile virus from an infected bird?

Human cases have not been traced to direct contact with birds. Although West Nile virus has not been shown to spread directly from birds to people, you should not touch dead birds, or any other dead animals with your bare hands. The possibility exists for virus from an infected bird to pass through a cut or opening in the skin. Use gloves to carefully place dead birds in a double plastic bag.

What should I do if I see a dead bird?

The Local Animal Control Officers, Health Officers, and the Department of Health and Human Services are taking reports of dead bird sightings within New Hampshire. While the Department of Health and Human Services is interested in collecting information about all dead birds as part of their efforts to understand West Nile virus, not all birds will be tested. Crows and bluejays are of particular

Hampshire residents to report all dead bird sightings to assist the department's monitoring efforts. If you ticks?

the infection to a mosquito. A list of animal species in which West Nile virus infection has been detected has continually increased since 1999.

Where did West Nile virus come from?

Outbreaks of the West Nile virus have occurred before in Egypt, Asia, Israel, South Africa, and parts of Europe and Australia. Before 1999, the West Nile