



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

West Nile Virus affects the central nervous system in horses. Symptoms may range from listlessness, trembling, depression, loss of appetite, stumbling, weakness, heat tilting and partial paralysis to convulsions and even death. Fever occurs in one out of four cases. Up to 40 percent of all horses showing clinical signs of West Nile Virus will die.



CAN HORSES SPREAD THE DISEASE?

Horses are known as dead-end hosts for the virus; that is, once a horse contracts West Nile Virus it will not transmit the disease to another person or horse. There is no danger in caring for an infected horse using normal animal-care precautions.



IS THERE TREATMENT?

There is no specific treatment for West Nile Virus infection, but a vaccine for horses is available. The initial vaccination requires two injections three to six weeks apart, and is followed by an annual booster. This vaccine is different from the vaccine used for equine encephalitis. Consult your veterinarian for details.

Health Department Contacts

Missouri: www.dhss.state.mo.us/WestNileVirus
Kansas: www.oznet.ksu.edu/westnilevirus

<hr/>	
Caldwell County, Missouri	
Health Department	816-586-2311
Carroll County, Missouri	
Health Department	660-542-3247
Cass County, Missouri	
Health Department	816-380-8425
Clay County, Missouri	
Health Department	816-476-4114
Clinton County, Missouri	
Health Department	816-539-2144
Franklin County, Kansas	
Health Department	785-229-3592
Independence, Missouri	
Health Department	816-325-7297
Jackson County, Missouri	
Health Department	816-404-6415
Johnson County, Kansas	
Health Department	913-477-8300
Johnson County, Missouri	
Health Department	660-747-6121
Kansas City, Missouri	
Health Department	816-513-6313
Lafayette County, Missouri	
Health Department	660-259-4371
Lawrence-Douglas County, Kansas	
Health Department	785-843-3060
Leavenworth County, Kansas	
Health Department	913-250-2000
Platte County, Missouri	
Health Department	816-858-2412
Ray County, Missouri	
Health Department	816-776-5413
Wyandotte County, Kansas	
Health Department	913-573-6712

MOHAKCA

Mid-America Regional Council
600 Broadway, Suite 300
Kansas City, MO 64105-1554
Phone 816/474-4240 Fax 816/421-7758



FIGHT THE BITE

WHAT HORSE OWNERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS

Kansas City Metropolitan Mosquito Task Force

MOHAKCA
Metropolitan Official Health Agencies of the Kansas City Area



WHAT IS WEST NILE VIRUS?

In 1999, West Nile Virus, a mosquito-borne infection, first appeared in New York. Missouri and Kansas both had cases in people and animals in 2002. This virus can cause encephalitis, which is an inflammation of the brain. Although the peak mosquito season runs from April to October in the Midwest, West Nile Virus cases occur primarily in the late summer or early fall.

The virus is typically spread by mosquitoes after they feed on infected birds and then bite people. It is unlikely that people can contract this virus from handling dead birds, but birds carry other diseases and should never be handled with your bare hands. Call your local health department to find out if they are tracking dead birds or have any special disposal instructions.



WHERE DO MOSQUITOES BREED?

There are more than 50 different species of mosquitoes in the Midwest. While most do not transmit West Nile or other mosquito-borne viruses, several mosquito species have been associated with West Nile Virus.

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water around the home. Weeds, tall grass, shrubbery and discarded tires also provide an outdoor home for adult mosquitoes. By eliminating places for mosquitoes to breed, we can go a long way toward preventing West Nile Virus.



FIGHT THE BITE

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR HORSES FROM MOSQUITOES AND WEST NILE VIRUS?

The best protection for horses is vaccination, but eliminating areas where mosquitoes breed will help protect not only your horses, but also you and your family.

- **Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or other water-holding containers on your property.**
- **Pay special attention to discarded tires on your property or in your neighborhood.**
- **Drill holes in the bottom of feed buckets and other containers that are left outdoors. Thoroughly clean livestock watering troughs regularly.**
- **Keep roof gutters clean and make sure they can drain properly.**
- **Use mosquito repellents containing DEET, fans, barrier cloth, flysheets or light blankets to decrease horses' exposure to mosquitoes.**
- **Aerate stock tanks and ponds or stock them with mosquito-eating fish. Drain and clean stock tanks once a week.**
- **Maintain swimming pools and drain pools that are not being used.**
- **Stable horses during mosquitoes' most active feeding times (dawn and dusk).**
- **Schedule pasture irrigation to minimize standing water.**
- **Cover boats and wheelbarrows or store them upside down.**
- **Make sure all windows and doors have screens, and that all screens are in good repair.**
- **Avoid turning on incandescent lights inside stables and barns in the evening and overnight. (Fluorescent lights do not attract mosquitoes.)**
- **Eliminate roosting areas for wild birds in barns and stables.**
- **Protect yourself by wearing shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active. Consider the use of mosquito repellent, according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors. Wash all treated skin and clothing when returning indoors.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.