



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

June 24, 2013



*Fight the Bite!  
Protection from the West  
Nile Virus*



According to various media sources, we have seen a surge in the number of West Nile Virus cases. On October 17, 2012 the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that 4,249 cases of West Nile Virus had been reported, which was the highest number since October, 2003. Approximately 70% of these cases originated in 8 states: Texas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Dakota, Michigan, Oklahoma, and Illinois. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all cases occurred in Texas. There have been 168 deaths so far attributed to the West Nile.

## CAUSES-

West Nile Virus that infects humans and mammals is caused by the bite of an infected mosquito. The Virus principally affects birds but also affects animals and reptiles.

## SYMPTOMS-

Most people that contract the West Nile Virus have little or no symptoms. About 20% of people that develop a mild infection called West Nile fever will have the following common signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Headaches
- Body aches
- Fatigue
- Back Pain
- Occasional Skin Rash
- Occasional Swollen Lymph Glands
- Occasional Eye Pain

## SERIOUS SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS-

In less than 1% of infected people, the virus causes a serious neurological infection. This type of infection can cause inflammation of the brain (**encephalitis**) or both the brain and surrounding membranes (**meningoencephalitis**). Serious infection may also include infection and inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord (**meningitis**) or inflammation of the spinal cord (**poliomyelitis**) and acute **flaccid paralysis**—a sudden weakness in your arms, legs or breathing muscles. Signs and symptoms of these diseases include:

- High Fever
- Severe headaches
- Stiff neck
- Disorientation or confusion
- Stupor or coma
- Tremors or muscle jerking
- Lack of coordination
- Convulsions
- Pain
- Partial paralysis or sudden muscle weakness

Signs and symptoms of the West Nile Virus usually last only for a few days. However, signs and symptoms of meningitis or encephalitis can last for several weeks and certain neurological effects, such as muscle weakness, may be permanent. Mild symptoms of West Nile fever usually last a few days.

If you should experience signs or symptoms of serious infection, such as severe headaches, stiff neck, disorientation or confusion, seek medical help quickly. A serious West Nile fever usually requires hospitalization.

## PREVENTION-

The best prevention for West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses is to avoid exposure to mosquitoes and to eliminate their breeding sites. To help you avoid these exposures and to control the West Nile Virus:

- Eliminate standing water around your properties. Pools of water are the ideal breeding spots.
- Clean and unclog gutters.
- Empty unused swimming pools.
- Change water in bird baths weekly.
- Remove old tires and any other containers that will hold idle water.
- Make sure that outside doors and window screens are secure with no holes or cracks that allow these pests to enter the structure.

## TIPS FOR SELF-PROTECTION-

- Avoid unnecessary outdoor activity unless it is a “have-to” situation, especially in the prime time of dawn, dusk and the early evening.
- When working or entering areas of mosquito infestation, wear long sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Apply insect repellent that contains an Environmental Protection Agency registered insect repellent. Check the label and purchase the product with the concentration of the active ingredient based on the length of time you’ll be working out. The stronger the percentage of the active ingredient the longer it will last.
- Stay abreast for yourself and employees of how they can become exposed to the West Nile.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of the West Nile.
- Make sure you and all employees are familiar with the action that they should take in case they have a symptom.

There is a vaccine available to treat horses but nothing is available to treat humans. Research is on-going to develop a vaccine for humans.

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Excerpts: [www.mayoclinic.com/health](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health)  
<http://ohdinsider.com>  
2/6/2013

***DON'T BE A VICTIM  
FIGHT THE BITE!!***

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***A VICTIM NEGLECTED  
COULD BE A VICTIM INFECTED!***