

## SENIORS ARE AT GREATEST RISK



While the chance of human infection and illness resulting from West Nile virus (WNV) is low, those at greatest risk for serious complications are persons over age 50. As people age, particularly at 65 and older, they should take great care to prevent their exposure to mosquitoes.

Unfortunately, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the elderly are less likely to use a mosquito repellent.

### HOW DOES WNV SPREAD?

WNV is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds.

### WHAT TYPE OF MOSQUITOES CARRY WNV?

There are many types of mosquitoes in DuPage County, but “floodwater” or “nuisance” mosquitoes are the ones most likely to be biting you this summer. These mosquitoes do not carry WNV.

The type of mosquitoes that spreads WNV is *Culex pipiens*, which breeds in stagnant water during the hot and dry months of July and August, when there is typically little rain. Since it is nearly impossible for the naked eye to identify floodwater and *Culex* mosquitoes, it is best to “Fight the Bite” of all mosquitoes.

[www.dupagehealth.org/ftb](http://www.dupagehealth.org/ftb)

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### USE REPELLENTS CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING:

DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (also called PMD) or IR3535. The EPA characterizes the active ingredients DEET and Picaridin as “conventional repellents” and Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus and IR3535 as “biopesticide repellents,” which are derived from natural materials.

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Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, particularly between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

Avoid shaded, bushy areas where mosquitoes rest.

Limit outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active.

Drain any standing water around your home.

**DONATED BLOOD CHECKED FOR WNV**

All donated blood is checked for WNV before being used. The risk of getting WNV through blood transfusions and organ transplants is rare, and should not prevent people who need surgery from having it. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor.

**WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF WNV?**

There is no way to tell if you will develop an illness if bitten by a mosquito infected with WNV.

80 percent of people infected with WNV will not show any symptoms.

20 percent who become infected will display symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms may last only a few days, but even healthy people have dealt with WNV symptoms for several weeks.

About one in 150 persons infected with WNV will develop severe illness. Be on the safe side if you suspect you have been infected and seek medical attention.

**WHAT IF I HAVE WNV?**

Symptoms typically develop within three to 14 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. There is no specific treatment, but milder WNV

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### WHAT IF I HAVE WNV? Continued

illness improves on its own and people do not need medical attention. If you develop symptoms of severe WNV illness, such as severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately.

### WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Since WNV is seasonal, visit the Health Department's website for the latest information: [www.dupagehealth.org/ftb](http://www.dupagehealth.org/ftb) and follow Fight the Bite on Twitter @fight\_the\_bite or become a fan on Facebook - [fightthebitedupage](https://www.facebook.com/fightthebitedupage).