



Wallingford Health Department

West Nile Virus

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What is West Nile Virus?

- West Nile virus (WNV) is **the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease** in the United States.
- It is most commonly spread to people by the **bite** of an infected mosquito.
- Cases of WNV occur during mosquito season, which **starts in the summer and continues through fall**.
- There are no vaccines to prevent or medications to treat WNV in people. Fortunately, most people infected with WNV do not feel sick.

- About **1 in 5 people** who are infected develop a fever and other symptoms. About **1 out of 150** infected **people** develop a serious, sometimes fatal, illness.
- You can reduce your risk of WNV by using insect repellent and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants to prevent mosquito bites.





West Nile Virus – Symptoms

- **No symptoms in most people.** Most people (8 out of 10) infected with West Nile virus do not develop any symptoms.
- **Febrile illness (fever) in some people.** About 1 in 5 people who are infected develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with febrile illness due to West Nile virus recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months.
- **Serious symptoms in a few people.** About 1 in 150 people who are infected develop a severe illness affecting the central nervous system such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord).
- Symptoms of severe illness include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis.
- Severe illness can occur in people of any age; however, people over 60 years of age are at greater risk for severe illness if they are infected (1 in 50 people). People with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and people who have received organ transplants, are also at greater risk.
- Recovery from severe illness might take several weeks or months. Some effects to the central nervous system might be permanent.
- About 1 out of 10 people who develop severe illness affecting the central nervous system die.



West Nile Virus – Diagnosis

- If you think you or a family member might have West Nile virus disease, **talk with your health care provider.**
- Healthcare providers diagnose West Nile virus infection based on:
 - Signs and symptoms
 - History of possible exposure to mosquitoes that can carry West Nile virus
 - Laboratory testing of blood or spinal fluid
- Your healthcare provider can order tests to look for West Nile virus infection or other infections that can cause similar symptoms.
- To learn more about testing, visit our [Healthcare Providers page](#).



West Nile Virus – Treatment

- No vaccine or specific medicines are available for West Nile virus infection. Antibiotics do not treat viruses.
- Rest, fluids, and over-the-counter pain medications may relieve some symptoms.
- In severe cases, patients often need to be hospitalized to receive supportive treatment, such as intravenous fluids, pain medication, and nursing care.
- To learn more about treatment, visit our [Healthcare Providers page](#).



West Nile Virus – Transmission and Prevention

- West Nile virus (WNV) is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes bite during the day and night.
- There is no vaccine to prevent WNV infection. The best way to prevent West Nile is to protect yourself from mosquito bites. Use insect repellent, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants, treat clothing and gear, and take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors.
- **Protect Yourself and Your Family from Mosquito Bites**
 - Use insect repellent. When used as directed, [EPA-registered](#) insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
 - Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants
 - Treat clothing and gear
 - Take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors
 - Use screens on windows and doors. Repair holes in screens to keep mosquitoes outdoors.
 - Use air conditioning, if available.
 - Stop mosquitoes from laying eggs in or near water.
 - Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, or trash containers.
 - Check for water-holding containers both indoors and outdoors.



Mosquito Control at Home

- You can take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors.
- Access both links below to learn more:
 - [Control Mosquitoes Outside Your Home](#)
 - [Control Mosquitoes Inside Your Home](#)



West Nile Virus - Statistics & Maps

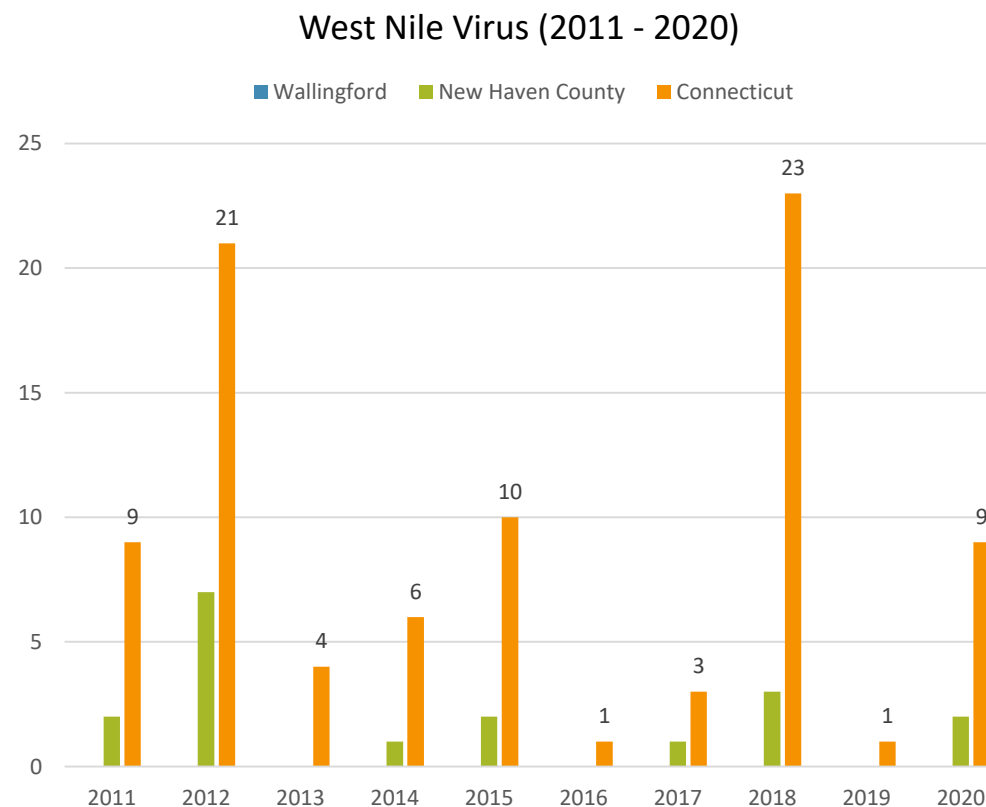
- Cases of West Nile virus (WNV) have been reported in states across the continental United States.
- WNV activity typically occurs during the **summer months and into the fall**.
- The annual number of reported WNV disease cases can fluctuate widely, as a result of periodic epidemics.
- All residents of and visitors to areas where WNV activity has been identified are at risk of WNV infection, particularly people who engage in outdoor work and recreational activities.
- West Nile virus disease is a nationally notifiable condition.
- Cases are reported to CDC by state and local health departments using standard case definitions.
- Arboviral surveillance data are reported to CDC through ArboNET. In addition to human disease, ArboNET maintains data on arboviral infections among presumptive viremic blood donors, veterinary disease cases, mosquitoes, dead birds, and sentinel animals.
- To access statistics and maps in Connecticut and other states in the United States: <https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/statsmaps/>
- OR Access the site by using the camera of your phone to scan the QR code on the right.





West Nile Virus - Wallingford

- From 2011 until 2020:
 - Wallingford had no cases reported of West Nile Virus (**fever & invasive**).
 - New Haven County had a total of 18 cases reported
 - Connecticut had a total of 87 cases reported
- For more data access: <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Epidemiology-and-Emerging-Infections/West-Nile-Virus-Statistics>





Questions and Concerns?

If you, your children or someone else is experiencing west nile virus symptoms,
talk to you healthcare provider.

If you have any questions and concerns,
contact the Wallingford Health Department:

Call: (203) 294-2065, or

E-mail: health@wallingfordct.gov

Wallingford Health Department Website:

<https://www.wallingfordct.gov/government/departments/health-department/>