



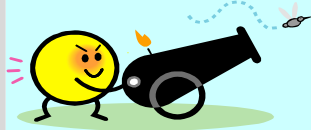
Safety Matters

Environmental Health & Safety

No. 19

Fight the Bite....

April showers bring May flowers, but July showers bring mosquitoes. In



Oklahoma, that can mean West Nile Virus and there have already been a few reported cases in the state. In 2005, there were 3000 reported cases in the US, including 119 deaths.

Symptoms typically develop between 3 and 14 days after a bite by an infected mosquito. Most people (80%) will have no symptoms at all. Most of the rest will have symptoms such as fever, headache, nausea, or rash that lasts for a few days or maybe a couple of weeks. But about 1 in 150 persons will develop severe illness that may include vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last for several weeks and may cause permanent neurological effects.

The easiest way to avoid WNV is to prevent mosquito bites.

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET. Generally, the higher the percentage of active ingredient a repellent contains, the longer it can protect you from mosquito bites. A higher percentage of the active ingredient does not mean that your protection is better—just that it will last longer. **Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions as printed on the product.** (A repellent won't kill 'skeeters—it just makes you harder to find.)
- Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use repellent and wear long sleeves and pants or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets, barrels—anything that can hold water. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths at least once a week. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.

And beware of home remedies: Fabric softener sheets, vitamins, bananas, Vick's Vaporub[®], marigolds, Avon Skin-So-Soft[®] bath oil, Mexican vanilla, dishes of Lemon Joy[®], frogs, etc. While some of them may seem to work, their effectiveness is often less than 10 minutes or none at all.