

**FIGHT
THE BITE!**

GRAND FORKS MOSQUITO CONTROL



5 COMMON MYTHS ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS

Myth #1: There's not much I can do about WNV.

Truth: There is a lot that you, personally, can do to reduce your chance of getting West Nile virus infection.

- Make it a habit to apply mosquito repellent with DEET when you're spending time outdoors. This will reduce the number of mosquito bites you get.
- Mosquitoes are usually most active from dusk to dawn. Pay close attention to protection during these hours, or avoid being outdoors if possible.
- Reduce mosquito breeding habitat around your house. The species of mosquito most common for transmitting WNV generally stays close to the habitat that it hatched from.
- Eliminate any standing water that remains longer than 7 days. Inspect your yard once a week: get rid of containers that aren't being used, empty water from flower pots, change water in bird baths and maintain clean gutters.



Myth #2: Kids are at the most danger of getting sick from West Nile Virus.

Truth: People over 60 are at the highest risk for developing severe West Nile disease.

- Relatively few children have been reported with severe West Nile Virus disease. By contrast, most of the deaths due to WNV were among people over 60 years old.
- It is always a good idea for children to avoid mosquito bites, but it's also important for adults - especially older adults - to take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

Myth #3: It's only people who are already in poor health who have to worry about West Nile virus.

Truth: Healthy, active older adults who spend time working and exercising outdoors have been affected by severe West Nile virus infection.

- Being over 60 is a risk factor for developing severe West Nile disease if infected with the virus. There is a risk of getting mosquito bites while leading an active life outdoors. This doesn't mean you have to stay inside - it does mean that it's important to use repellent when you go outside.

Myth #4: Repellents containing DEET are not safe.

Truth: Repellents containing DEET are very safe when used according to directions.

- Because DEET is so widely used, a great deal of testing has been done. When manufacturers seek registration with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for products such as DEET, laboratory testing regarding both short-term and long-term health effects must be carried out.
- There are products with different strengths (percentage of DEET) available. The longer the protection you need the higher percent of DEET needed.
- Repellent with DEET can be used for both adults and children, according to directions.



Myth #5: As long as my area has a mosquito control program, I don't have to worry about using repellent.

Truth: Mosquito control activities don't eliminate every mosquito, so personal protection is still important.

- Grand Forks Health Department maintains a proactive mosquito control program designed to reduce mosquito populations and mosquito-borne diseases. However, this program cannot eliminate all mosquitoes. Personal protection, such as using repellent, keeping window screens in good condition, and control of household breeding sites are important steps for the public.



- Grand Forks currently has a very low population of nuisance mosquitoes. This gives a false impression about the risk of WNV. Even though there are very few mosquitoes in our community, the risk of WNV is still elevated. Please take the necessary precautions to avoid mosquito bites.



For information about West Nile Virus and the Grand Forks mosquito control program visit our website at www.gfsmosquito.com or call the Information Line at 701-787-8144