



Naugatuck Valley Health District

98 Bank Street, Seymour, CT 06483

Phone 203 881-3255

Fax 203 881-3259

WIC 203 888-1271

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INFECTIOUS & COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

NVHD provides case investigations, counseling, referral, health education and control measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Click on any of the links below for more information:

- **West Nile Virus**
 - **What to do if you find a dead bird?**
 - **Steps for submitting a dead bird for testing**
- **Rabies Prevention**
- **Ticks for Lyme Disease Testing**
- **Foodborne Outbreak Investigations**
- **Tuberculosis**
- **Meningitis vaccine necessary for College Entry**

West Nile Virus

West Nile fever is a mosquito-borne viral infection that can cause inflammation of the brain. It is named after the West Nile district of Uganda where the virus was first isolated in 1937. The viruses that cause West Nile fever and St. Louis Encephalitis come from the same family of flaviviruses, and cause diseases that are similar to one another.

How do people get West Nile fever?

West Nile virus is usually spread to humans by the bite of infected mosquitoes (primarily the Culex species). A mosquito is infected by biting a bird that carries the virus.

What are the symptoms of West Nile fever?

Most people who are infected have no symptoms or may experience mild illness such as a fever and headache before fully recovering. In some individuals, particularly the elderly, West Nile virus can cause serious disease that affects the central nervous system. At its most serious, it can cause permanent neurological damage and can be fatal. Symptoms generally occur 5-15 days following the bite of an infected mosquito, and range from a slight fever, headache, rash, swollen nodes and conjunctivitis (irritation of the lining of the eye) to the rapid onset of a severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, coma, or death.

Who is at risk of contracting West Nile fever?

Anyone can become infected with the virus. However, the very old are more likely to become ill and develop serious symptoms when infected.

If I live in an area where birds with West Nile virus have been reported and I am bitten by a mosquito, am I likely to get sick?

No. Even in areas where mosquitoes do carry the virus, very few mosquitoes (usually less than 1 out of 500) are infected. The chance that one mosquito bite will be from an infected mosquito is very small.

If bitten by an infected mosquito, will I get sick?

If bitten by an infected mosquito, your chances of developing illness are roughly one in 300.

If bitten, should I be tested for West Nile virus?

No. Most mosquitoes are not infected with the West Nile virus. Illnesses related to mosquito bites are rare. However, you should see a doctor immediately if you develop symptoms such as high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, or severe headaches. Patients with mild symptoms are likely to recover completely, and do not require any specific medication or laboratory testing.

Is there a treatment for West Nile fever?

Although there is no specific treatment, medication or cure, the symptoms and complications of the disease can be treated. Most people who get this illness recover from it.

Is there a vaccine for West Nile fever?

No vaccine for West Nile fever exists.

What to do if you find a dead bird?

West Nile Virus Update Regarding Dead Bird Collection

Guidance for residents with questions regarding steps to take if they find a dead

bird on their property

Steps to take when you find a dead bird and want to submit it for testing:

Because the Connecticut Department of Public Health is no longer testing dead birds for West Nile Virus, residents may dispose of a dead bird found on their property by wrapping it in newspaper, putting it in a double plastic bag and putting it in with their regular household trash.

Please remember that people should not handle any dead animal with bare hands. Residents are reminded to limit outdoor activities from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active. If you are outdoors, wear long sleeved shirts, long pants, and use an appropriate mosquito repellent containing no more than 30% DEET. Cover arms and legs of children when outdoors or near areas with stagnant water.

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station continues to monitor the presence of West Nile Virus infected mosquitoes through mosquito trapping, as this method proves to be an effective indicator of the virus in the environment.

If you have further questions, please call Naugatuck Valley Health District at 881-3255 during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

The Naugatuck Valley Health District office is located at 98 Bank Street, Seymour and serves residents of the municipalities of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Seymour and Shelton. Visit our website at www.nvhd.org for additional information.

Where do I call if I need more information on West Nile fever?

Call your local health department or the **Connecticut Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7994** for more information on West Nile fever.

The State's mosquito monitoring and management program is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Department of Public Health (DPH), The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the University of Connecticut Department of Pathobiology (UCONN). The program is coordinated by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Further information may be obtained from the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health at <http://www.dph.state.ct.us>

Mosquito Management Program Information:

Department of Environmental Protection

(860) 424-4184 - Latest information on test results, spray locations, protective measures.

(860) 642-7630 - Technical questions regarding mosquitoes, mosquito control measures.

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

(203) 974-8500 - Mosquito trapping.

Department of Public Health

(860) 509-7994 - WNV infections in people.

(860) 509-7742 - Effects of pesticides on people.

Department of Agriculture

(860) 713-2505 - WNV infections in domestic animals, including livestock, poultry, and pets.

Call your local health department to report dead birds. You can find the number in the blue pages of your local phone book.

Meningitis Vaccine for College Entry

Connecticut State Law requires all public and private college and university students who live in on-campus housing to be vaccinated against meningitis.

**Call (203) 881-3255 between the hours of 8:30 and 4:00
for appointment and fee information**

The Naugatuck Valley Health District will be holding clinics to administer this vaccine as follows:

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Time: 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Location: Naugatuck Valley Health District

Address: 98 Bank Street, Seymour, CT 06483

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