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# Prevent Mosquito-borne Illness

# MOSQUITO PROOF

# NEWTON

## What are Mosquito-borne illnesses?

Mosquito-borne illnesses are spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. In the Northeastern United States, they usually are caused by viruses such as West Nile virus (WNV) or Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus (EEEV). There is a low risk of WNV infection from a mosquito bite. Most people who are bitten by infected mosquitoes experience no illness or only mild illness, but a small number of people can develop more serious disease.

## How is it spread?

Mosquito-borne illness is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus from biting infected birds. People usually cannot get the virus from another person or directly from an infected bird. However, you should use gloves when handling any dead animals. Put dead animals in double plastic bags before disposing of them in the trash. Wash your hands afterwards.

## Is it in Newton?

WNV first appeared in Newton in the summer of 2000. Last summer, WNV-infected birds and mosquitoes were found in Newton. There also were a number of human cases in the Newton area. There is a risk of WNV and EEEV in Massachusetts again this summer.

## Am I at risk of becoming sick from mosquito bites?

Mosquitoes are most active and most likely to carry disease between July and early October, but if the weather remains warm, the risk period can extend as late as November. People at higher risk for developing serious symptoms from WNV are those over 50 years of age; however, EEEV can cause serious illness in any age group. The 19 human WNV cases in Massachusetts in 2003 ranged in age from 6 to 81 years.

## What should I do if I get bitten by a mosquito?

Mosquito-borne illness is very rare in Newton. Most mosquitoes do not carry viruses that cause human illness, and the risk of illness following a mosquito bite is small. However, you should see your doctor immediately if you develop high fever, confusion, severe headache, stiff neck, or if your eyes become sensitive to light.

## What should I do if I find a dead bird (especially a crow or blue jay)?

In Newton, if you find a dead or sick crow or blue jay, call the **WNV Info Line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (627-7968)**. The state health department tracks dead birds and will advise you if the bird should be collected for testing. Although not all birds reported will be sent for testing, it is very important that all dead birds be reported.

## What is the Newton Health Department doing to prevent WNV?

The Newton health department treats street storm drains to prevent mosquito breeding. It also monitors mosquito levels in the city and assists with dead bird collections. **over →**

# How Can I Protect Myself?

## Follow these steps to prevent mosquito bites:



If you are outdoors in an area with mosquitoes, consider these options

Use a mosquito repellent. The most effective repellents contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide).

- Follow the precautions on the label carefully for safe application and use. DO NOT use on children under 2 months of age. Use low concentrations on children under 2 years of age. For more information go to [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)
- Do not use products containing DEET concentrations of more than 30%. Products with 30% DEET or less are similar in safety. Products with 30% DEET give up to 6 hours of protection; 10% gives about 2 hours.
- Products with DEET should be applied after sunscreen; avoid combination products.



- Wear protective clothing such as a long sleeved shirt, long pants and socks.

Although mosquitoes can bite at any time of day, try to limit time outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active -- or use above precautions.

## Follow these steps to prevent mosquitoes from breeding:



Mosquitoes need water to breed. They can develop into adults in a little as a week. Make sure that items like these don't collect water, or that you clean them out once a week.

**Containers-** Turn over or cover unused flower pots, buckets, garbage cans, tarps and wheelbarrows.

**Gutters-** Remove leaves and other debris that can clog gutters and trap water.

**Pools-** Cover unused swimming pools and turn over kiddie pools when not in use. Be sure to keep swimming pool covers clear of leaves and water.

**Old Tires-** Cover or dispose of them. They are one of mosquitoes' favorite places to breed.



For West Nile virus information, call 1-866-MASS-WNV  
Or visit [www.state.ma.us/dph](http://www.state.ma.us/dph)