



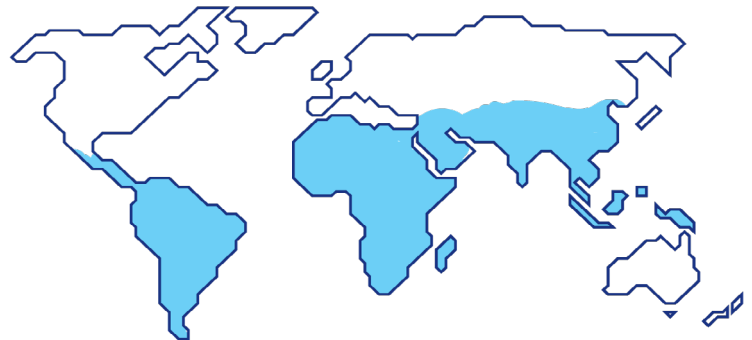
What

The West Nile virus is caused by a virus. It is most commonly spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquitoes that transmit the virus are most active between dusk and dawn. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. In turn, infected mosquitoes spread the West Nile virus to people and other animals by biting them.



Who

Travelers to areas where West Nile fever is endemic, as well as residents of these regions, are at risk of acquiring the infection. The virus is primarily transmitted through mosquito bites, particularly from infected Culex mosquitoes.

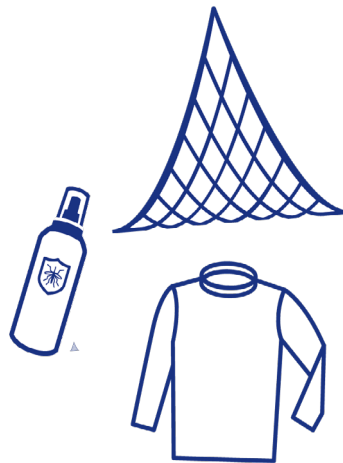


Where and when

West Nile virus is widely distributed around the world, including in Europe. The virus can occur in regions where the mosquitoes that transmit it survive and are active.

Prevention

There is no active human vaccine available for West Nile virus. Protection against mosquito bites and mosquito control programs are the primary preventive measures. Travelers should be aware of local outbreaks and take precautions accordingly.



Treatment

The virus can be detected early in the course of the disease. However, there is no specific treatment for the virus itself. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms. Travelers are advised to consult their healthcare provider for the latest guidance and recommendations.

Symptoms

The incubation period for West Nile virus is typically 2-6 days (range 2-14 days). About 80% of people infected with the virus do not develop any symptoms. For those who do, symptoms can include the sudden onset of fever, headache, malaise, back pain, muscle aches (myalgias), and loss of appetite (anorexia). These symptoms are usually self-limiting. Older adults, people with cancer, and those with specific immune system deficiencies are at higher risk for developing severe disease.



In case of infection

The diagnosis of West Nile virus is primarily based on identifying antiviral antibodies in blood or cerebrospinal fluid. The virus can be detected directly during the early stages of infection. Less than 0.5% of patients develop neuroinvasive disease, and of these, about 10% may die. After the acute phase, some individuals may experience lingering symptoms such as fatigue, memory impairment, headaches, and balance problems, which can persist for months or even years.