

## **West Nile Virus News**

The perceived threat of West Nile Virus poses a serious health hazard to everyone spending time outdoors this summer. Data and other testimonies regarding WNV in 2003, suggest a possible outbreak of this potentially virulent disease.

West Nile is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord). West Nile virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito becomes infected by biting a bird that carries the virus.

West Nile virus cannot be spread from person to person. West Nile virus is not spread by person-to-person contact such as touching, kissing, or caring for someone who is infected.

### **Is There a West Nile Virus Vaccine?**

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for humans infected with WNV but physicians may treat patients to minimize symptoms of the infection. If you think you may have been infected with WNV, contact your physician immediately.

### **La Crosse County Control Efforts**

- Develop community-based WNV prevention plans with local municipalities.
- Provide assistance to local municipalities to expand knowledge on personal protection, habitat monitoring, and source reduction.
- Insecticide control of mosquito larvae when source reduction and habitat modification are not feasible.
- Enable/empower residents to take an active role in WNV prevention by reducing exposure to risk factors

