



FACT SHEET: Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2315 – 28TH STREET
PORT HURON, MI 48060
(810) 987-5306

MOSQUITO FACTS

All mosquitoes require water to develop. The adult female lays her eggs in standing water or in areas that will flood. The eggs hatch into larvae and grow until they form a comma shaped pupa and emerge as a flying adult. Adult mosquitoes feed on nectar from flowers, but the female mosquito must also have a blood meal for her eggs to develop. It is during this biting stage that mosquitoes spread disease. A mosquito can develop from an egg to a biting adult in less than ten days.

- Mosquitoes do not breed in tall grass. However, tall grass and other shade protected areas such as shrubs and ornamental trees with low lying branches provide mosquitoes with shelter and resting areas.

MOSQUITOES ARE GENERALLY ACTIVE FROM APRIL, UNTIL THE FIRST HARD FREEZE IN THE FALL.

- Species that breed around the home are often called "domestic" and are rarely found far from human habitation.
- All domestic forms will accept humans as a blood meal host and many will enter houses to feed.
- The most common mosquitoes found in urban and suburban areas will lay eggs in virtually any receptacle containing water and decomposing organic material such as leaves, grass clippings or algae.
- Breeding habitats around the home include:
 - (1) Discarded tires, (2) Unwashed bird baths, (3) Clogged rain gutters, (4) Plastic wading pools, (5) Toys left outside, (6) Other water sources allowed to lie stagnant for at least four days.

Mosquitoes tend to be most active from dusk until dawn. However, it should not be forgotten that mosquitoes may also be very active during the day in areas which are heavily overgrown with vegetation.

Health concerns are not the only reason to control mosquitoes. The annoyance can be enough to make outdoor activities such as boating, barbecuing, picnics and all other outdoor activities unpleasant.

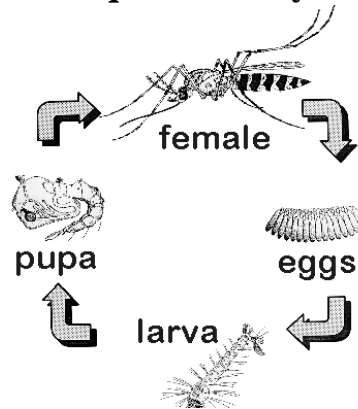
NATURAL TRANSMISSION

Mosquitoes become infected with West Nile Virus when they feed on infected birds that carry the virus in their blood. After 10 to 14 days, the mosquito's salivary glands become infected and those infected mosquitoes can then transmit West Nile Virus to humans and other animals while biting them to take blood. During blood feeding, the mosquito injects the virus into the animal or human, where it multiplies and may cause illness.

WNV is transmitted primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito. It has been isolated from at least 43 species of mosquitoes throughout the world. In most countries, mosquitoes belonging to the genus *Culex* are the primary vectors. In the U.S., the common house mosquito (*Culex pipiens*) is considered to be the principal vector species. In addition, WNV has occasionally been reported from ticks, most notably bird-feeding ticks (*Ornithodoros* and *Argas* spp.).

Culex pipiens are the principle mosquito species found in urban and suburban environments. The larvae are commonly found in polluted water. This water is found collecting in roadside ditches, catch basins, and artificial containers such as tires and in swimming pools that are in a state of disuse. Although *Culex pipiens* prefer avian (birds) hosts for a blood meal, these mosquitoes will readily bite humans and other mammals.

Mosquito Life Cycle



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THESE WEBSITES:

www.stclaircounty.org/offices/health/updates.asp
www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus
www.cdc.gov