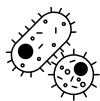


The following is general information for those involved in the laboratory-based research of West Nile virus.¹⁻³
Contact occupational.health@cuanschutz.edu if you have any questions.

ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS



West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne zoonotic disease. While mosquitoes are the primary vector for WNV, birds are the primary reservoir. Humans, horses, and other mammals may be infected as the result of a bite from an infected mosquito. WNV infection may also occur through laboratory contact with infected blood and tissue.

EXPOSURE TO WEST NILE VIRUS

- Accidental exposure to WNV may occur through
 - Needle stick
 - Contact with broken skin (direct or indirect)

WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTION

- 80% of people infected with WNV are asymptomatic
- 20% of people infected with WNV experience West Nile fever or severe West Nile disease
- Symptoms of West Nile fever or severe West Nile disease
 - Headache
 - High fever
 - Neck stiffness
 - Disorientation
 - Muscle weakness
 - Paralysis
- Symptoms typically appear 3 to 14 days after exposure
- Risk factors include weakened immune system and being over the age of 50

WEST NILE VIRUS INFECTION PREVENTION



- Personal protective equipment for work with WNV
 - Laboratory coat, gloves; safety goggles; N95 respirator (requires fit test) or PAPR (requires training)
 - Do not reuse PPE used for work with biohazards
 - Dispose of all PPE as biohazardous waste
 - Always wash your hands after removing gloves and after handling biohazards
- Prevention and Treatment
 - There is no vaccine or medicine available for the prevention or treatment of West Nile virus

WEST NILE VIRUS EXPOSURE SAFETY

Follow proper exposure reporting protocols

- If you are injured on the job, promptly report the incident to your supervisor
 - Immediately call or email Occupational Health (303) 724-9145 during business hours
 - Outside of normal hours seek medical attention at emergency department or other healthcare provider
 - Fill out incident report for exposure to biological hazards
 - File a claim with University Risk Management
 - <https://www.cu.edu/risk/file-claim>
- Minor cuts and abrasions should be immediately cleansed with antibacterial soap
 - Protect injuries from exposure

Tell your physician you work with West Nile virus

- Whenever you are ill, mention to your physician that you work with West Nile virus

Sources

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About West Nile virus. May 15, 2024. Accessed December 17, 2024. www.cdc.gov/west-nile-virus/about/index.html.
2. World Health Organization. West Nile virus. October 3, 2017. Accessed December 17, 2024. www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/west-nile-virus.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recommendations for protecting laboratory, field, and clinical workers from the West Nile virus exposure. December 2005. Accessed December 17, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-115/pdfs/2006-115.pdf>.

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For more information, refer to the Occupational Health website:
<https://research.cuanschutz.edu/ehs/home/divisions/occupational-health>
or contact Occupational Health at occupational.health@cuanschutz.edu

