

## Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca). You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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## Simple precautions reduce West Nile virus risk

Summer is here, and so are mosquitoes. Albertans are urged to take precautions to protect themselves against West Nile virus infection.

Exposure to mosquitoes brings a risk of West Nile Virus. Some carry the virus, so it's important to avoid being bitten.

Whenever engaging in outdoor activities, or even just relaxing outside, all Albertans can take these simple steps to prevent bites and protect themselves from West Nile virus:

- Wear a long-sleeved, light-colored shirt, pants, and a hat.
- Use a Health Canada-approved insect repellent (e.g. products containing DEET or Icaridin).
- Consider staying indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

After being bitten by a mosquito carrying West Nile virus, humans can develop West Nile non-neurological syndrome (formerly known as West Nile fever) or the more serious West Nile neurological syndrome.

Symptoms of non-neurological syndrome can be uncomfortable, including fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, skin rash, swollen glands and headache. For people who develop neurological syndrome, symptoms can be more severe, including tremors, drowsiness, confusion, swallowing problems, high fever, unconsciousness, paralysis and even death.

From 2003 to 2018, 532 cases of West Nile virus were confirmed in Alberta, many of which were acquired here in the province and not travel-related. Of all of these cases, 458 were non-neurological syndrome.



Albertans can learn more about West Nile virus and the precautions necessary to reduce risk at [www.fightthebite.info](http://www.fightthebite.info) or by calling Health Link at 811.