

West Nile Virus

What is the West Nile Virus? West Nile Virus is a commonly found flavivirus. The virus can infect humans, birds, horses and some other mammals. In a small number of people infected by the virus, the disease can be serious, even fatal.

Where does the West Nile Virus come from? West Nile Virus is most often spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquito species most likely to carry the West Nile Virus is *Culex Pipiens*. This mosquito's natural habitat is tree holes that are often filled with water and organic matter. Any feature that replicates this natural habitat will likely provide a home for this mosquito's family.

What can I do to help? Keeping your property free of mosquito breeding opportunities is the most effective way to help in the elimination of West Nile Virus. This can be accomplished by emptying the water from containers, empty flower pots, water-filled tires and children's swimming pools and toys; changing the water in bird baths around the home once a week, and cleaning clogged eave troughs to allow free flow of runoff.

What is the city doing to help? Since 2003, Rochester Hills has participated in an active West Nile Virus Abatement Program. Each year the Department of Public Service and Parks Department crews clean out our catch basins that are ideal breeding habitats for *Culex Pipiens*. Once the catch basins are cleaned, a larvicide briquette is dropped in. The larvicide prevents the emergence of adult mosquitoes from the standing water deep inside the basins, lasts the entire summer and specifically targets mosquitoes in our area that are known to carry the virus. Grant funding from Oakland County covers a portion of the costs associated with this abatement program.

Where can I get more information? The websites links below are packed with information on the West Nile Virus and the elimination of mosquito breeding conditions.

[Michigan Department of Environmental Quality](#)

[Oakland County Health Department](#)

[Michigan Department of Community Health](#)

[Center for Disease Control](#)

