



## West Nile Virus: Fact Sheet #5

### Information for Outdoor Work & Play

West Nile virus occurs in many bird species. Although we do not expect it in the NWT, many parts of southern Canada will experience some West Nile virus activity throughout the summer. Here are some precautions to take if you travel to an area where West Nile Virus has been reported.

1. Wear long sleeved shirts and full-length trousers (two layers of clothing make biting more difficult but obviously this may be hazardous in warm weather or while doing heavy work). In hot conditions (potential heat stress) and where there is high risk, special suits of a mesh material with elasticized cuffs and attached hoods can be obtained and would be useful.
2. High boots and taping or sealing ends of trousers can be useful to prevent mosquito bites.
3. Wear light coloured clothing, as it is less attractive to mosquitoes.
4. Use DEET (N,N - diethyl meta-toluamide) insect repellents on exposed skin following package directions carefully. The concentration of DEET varies in various repellents. The higher concentrations do not provide better protection but rather extend the length of time for protection from 3-8 hours. Follow the following rules when using DEET:
  - **Children under 6 months of age** – do not use personal insect repellants containing DEET on infants.
  - **Children aged 6 months to 2 years** – in situations where a high risk of complications from insect bites exist, the use of one application per day of DEET may be considered for this age group. The least concentrated product (10% DEET or less) should be used. The product should be applied sparingly and not be applied to the face and hands. Prolonged use should be avoided.
  - **Children between 2 to 12 years** – the least concentrated product (10% DEET or less) should be used. Do not apply more than three times per day. Do not apply to the face and hands. Prolonged use should be avoided.
  - **Adults** – should not use products containing more than 30% DEET.

**Note:** Refer to the safety tips as indicated in Health Canada's Information Sheet "Safety Tips on Using Personal Insect Repellents". It can be found at [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/wnv-vno/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/wnv-vno/index_e.html). Do not use DEET on pregnant women or infants.
5. Certain DEET containing products can be applied to clothing. Read and follow instructions carefully.



6. If practical, you may wear a mosquito net over your hat or cap to protect head, face and neck. Keep repellent away from eyes and mouth and to help prevent eye and mouth contact, do not put on palms of hands and fingers. Wash your hands after applying repellent.
7. If practical, work outdoors when it is cooler and there is brisk air movement or when there is strong sunlight. Mosquitoes are less active in these weather conditions.
8. If practical, stay indoors at dawn and dusk and in the early evening hours when mosquitoes are more active.
9. In the field and at home, use proper screens in good condition on windows and doors of any lodging.

**For further information:**

Contact the Office of The Chief Medical Health Officer at (867) 920-8877.

Visit the following websites:

[www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca) – NWT Department of Health and Social Services (See Programs & Services Section)

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/wnv-vno/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/wnv-vno/index_e.html) – Health Canada