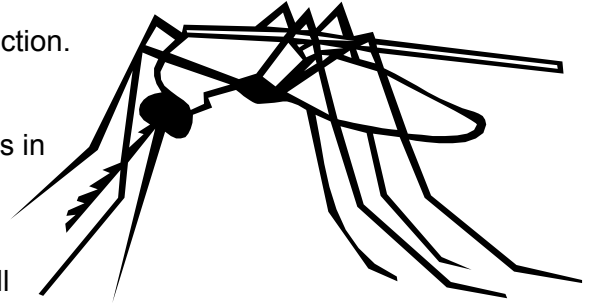


West Nile Virus Infection

Self-care Tips for Dealing with West Nile Virus Symptoms

There is no vaccine or medicine for West Nile virus (WNV) infection. However, there are some self-care tips you can do:

- Use over-the-counter medicine that contains ibuprophen (as in Advil), acetaminophen (as in Tylenol), or naproxen (as in Aleve) to help control fever, headache and body aches.
- Drink fluids often. Water, clear juices, and sports drinks will defend against dehydration and weakness. Dehydration can make headaches and fatigue worse. Call your doctor if you are vomiting, have nausea and/or decreased appetite that keep you from getting enough fluids. Your doctor may give you an anti-nausea medicine or intravenous (IV) fluids to break the cycle of dehydration.
- Listen to your body and rest in a quiet, dark area when tired. WNV stresses the body's immune system. Your body will need time to repair itself. People with WNV fever have experienced fatigue and weakness even several weeks after the acute illness. Frequent naps and nutritious snacks support your body's efforts to 'get back to normal'.
- Use sunglasses if you will be out in bright light. Bright light can often trigger a headache. Headaches can be persistent several days or weeks after the initial illness.
- If you were getting regular exercise before you were sick you need to 're-train'. Start slowly, and gradually build your stamina and endurance. Again, be careful not to get dehydrated with your workout. Drink fluids before you start your workout, during and after. Eat protein rich foods to aid in regaining muscle mass. Protein rich foods include: meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, nuts and nut butters, beans and other legumes.
- You may find returning to work full time very tiring, which may affect your productivity and safety. Again, stay well hydrated, eat well, and try napping during your lunch break. You may want to talk with your supervisor about shorter work hours or a gradual return to your usual work hours.
- West Nile virus may also cause serious illnesses: encephalitis (inflammation of the brain); meningitis (inflammation of the brain's lining or spinal cord); or paralysis. More severe symptoms may include severe headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, mental confusion, tremors, muscle weakness, convulsions or coma. These severe infections can result in brain damage, hearing loss, movement difficulties, vision changes, permanent paralysis, or even death. Persons with these symptoms need to seek medical attention immediately.



For more information: www.santacruzhealth.org/fightthebite