

West Nile Virus in School Settings

The West Nile Virus continues to be a health concern and a much talked about topic in the media. Last year, in August we sent out a Health Series Alert Update on West Nile Virus. Student Health Services in collaboration with the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness wanted to highlight the following information regarding the virus:

- The West Nile Virus (WNV) is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito.
- The virus cannot be transmitted from an infected person or animal so the best way to protect yourself is to reduce the number of mosquito bites you receive.
- To date most confirmed cases of WNV have been in persons 50 years of age and older. Children are not at an increased risk for developing WNV infection.
- Most WNV infections are mild and often undetected.
- Symptoms usually occur within 3 to 14 days after infection.
- Symptoms generally last 3 to 6 days and in recent outbreaks, symptoms occurring among patients hospitalized with severe disease include:
 - Fever
 - Weakness
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Headache and or change in mental status
 - Rash
- Children can be allowed to play outside; however, a few precautions should be taken:
 - Use insect repellent according to manufacturer's direction and with parent's consent. Be careful not to spray aerosol or pump products in enclosed areas.
 - Eliminate areas of standing water around the school. These areas can include gutters, tires used in football practice or in the playground, ditches, flat roofs, buckets as well as toys that hold water. Any stagnant water should be discarded.
 - When outside for long periods of time, children and adults should wear protective clothing such as long pants, long sleeved-shirts, and socks.
 - Try to avoid areas where there are weeds, tall grass, and bushes or where there is known mosquito activity.
 - If pesticides are used to kill mosquitoes, the products should be used in accordance with guidelines set by the US Environment Protection Agency. Avoid exposure to pesticides to decrease the risk of any reactions.

Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness is conducting bird surveillance for West Nile Virus. If a fresh dead crow, blue jay or raptor is found on the property, call the **Dead Bird Pick-up Line** at **(404) 524-7368**. Birds that appear to have died within the past 24 hours and in are good condition (no rotting, severe injury) can be picked up for testing for the virus by the county. If the bird is in poor condition, the bird can be picked up by using gloves or a plastic bag and thrown in the trash. The County is also tracking the locations of all dead bird calls, so if a dead bird is found, please call the Dead Bird Pick-up line to report the location of the dead bird.

For more information on mosquito control or WNV, you can call the **Mosquito Hotline** at **(404) 730-5296**, or visit **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website** at <http://www.cdc.gov/>.