

## **SYMPTOMS OF WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV) INFECTION**

When someone is infected with WNV they will typically have one of three outcomes. No symptoms - most people who have been infected with the WNV will not become ill. West Nile Fever, or a severe West Nile neuroinvasive disease (WNVND)

About 20% will develop West Nile fever, with an incubation period of 3 – 14 days.

### **West Nile fever – a sudden onset of:**

Fever	Fatigue
Muscle pain	Swollen and painful lymph nodes
Vomiting	Pain behind the eyes
Headache	Rash similar to measles –on the trunk, arms and neck.

Both the rash and swollen lymph nodes are less common. These symptoms can last a few days (3-6) or even several months. There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. Those with West Nile fever usually recover on their own with over the counter medications to relieve the symptoms.

### **West Nile Encephalitis or Meningitis**

About 1 in 150 infections will result in severe neurological disease. Most at risk are those over 50, though all age groups are susceptible. Encephalitis is more common than Meningitis.

**Encephalitis** – swelling of the brain    **Meningitis** – swelling of the membrane covering the brain or spinal cord

### **Symptoms of both include:**

High fever	Headache
Stiff neck	Stupor
Disorientation	Muscle weakness
Paralysis	Convulsions
Coma	

### **Secondary symptoms:**

Gastrointestinal symptoms  
Weakness  
Sensory disfunction

WNVND disease may last weeks to months. Again, there is no treatment for the infection itself, but hospitalization is necessary in most cases, to provide nursing, IV fluids, respiratory support, and prevention of secondary infections. In 2003, 7% of those with neuroinvasive WNV infections were fatal. Those over 70 more at risk for fatality, though all age groups have experienced fatalities.