

# Protect Your Horse from West Nile Virus



## What is West Nile Virus (WNV)?

West Nile virus (WNV) is a virus caused by the bite of an infected mosquito. Both people and horses can become infected with WNV. People cannot become infected with WNV from contact with their horse, only by the bite of an infected mosquito.

## How do horses become infected with WNV?

Mosquitoes get WNV when they bite infected birds. The virus is then passed to a horse through the bite of the infected mosquito. Many unvaccinated horses infected with WNV will become sick and die. There is no treatment.

## What are the symptoms of WNV in horses?

Symptoms include stumbling, staggering, wobbly gait, circling, hind limb weakness, inability to stand, muscle twitching, fever, seizure, coma, and paralysis. Call your veterinarian right away if your horse has any of these symptoms.

## How can I protect my horse from WNV?

You can protect your horse by having it vaccinated for WNV. There are currently three approved WNV vaccines available for horses. Every vaccination requires a yearly booster to continue to protect your horse. The best time to have your horse vaccinated is early spring. Contact your veterinarian to get your horse vaccinated correctly.



## How can I keep my horse from being bitten by mosquitoes?

Stable your horse from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes bite the most. Use fans in the stable to circulate air to help reduce the number of mosquitoes. Use a horse mosquito repellent to reduce the number of mosquito bites when your horse is outside.

Help reduce mosquito breeding sites:

- Stock water troughs with mosquito fish that eat mosquito larvae (call your local mosquito control program), use mosquito “dunks” (available at hardware stores), or drain and clean weekly
- Replace water in pet water dishes, birdbaths, and other containers frequently
- Drain standing water around your home

## Where can I get more information about WNV?

California Department of Food and Agriculture (916) 654-1447  
[www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/WNV\\_Info.html](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/WNV_Info.html)

California Department of Public Health (916) 552-9740  
[www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm)