



**Jefferson County  
Department of Health  
and Environment**

*To create, promote & enhance  
health & vitality through  
innovation, collaboration  
and celebration*

**Administration**

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**Arvada**

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Suite D202  
Mountain Resource Center  
Conifer, CO 80433  
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**Environmental Health**

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Edgewater, CO 80214  
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**Vital Records**

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*Public Health . . .  
Everyday, Everywhere,  
Everyone*



**Public Service Announcement**

March 1, 2004

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Environmental Health Zoonosis  
or Nancy Braden, 303-239-7138  
Public Information Coordinator

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**West Nile Virus Can Be Beat, Drain Standing Water and Wear Your DEET**

Mosquito season is approaching and with it the risk of West Nile Virus. Jefferson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE) urges residents to follow precautions this season to avoid mosquito bites and West Nile Virus. The virus is carried long distances by infected birds which infect mosquitoes. The infected mosquitoes then transmit the virus locally to humans and animals, primarily birds and horses.

West Nile Virus (WNV) hit Colorado hard in 2003. By the end of February 2004, 2945 people were diagnosed with the virus (157 in Jefferson County), 54 people died (3 in Jefferson County), and of those 157 diagnosed in Jefferson County, 8% have not yet fully recovered. Everyone should now realize how seriously debilitating and life-threatening a bite from a mosquito can be.

JCDHE mosquito surveillance, control and public education activities will continue throughout the 2004 mosquito season. Surveillance activities generally begin between late May and early June. "West Nile Virus can be beat, drain standing water and wear your DEET" is a familiar jingle at JCDHE and one that we hope spreads through the County. All residents are encouraged to follow the following precautions to help minimize mosquito activity and WNV:

- **DRAIN** standing water around the house weekly since it's where mosquitoes lay eggs, including: tires, cans, flowerpots, clogged rain gutters, rain barrels, toys and puddles.
- **DUSK & DAWN** are when mosquitoes that carry the virus are most active, so limit outdoor activities or take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.
- **DEET** is an effective ingredient to look for in insect repellents. Always follow label instructions carefully. The three JCDHE Communicable Disease Program nurses reveal that 69.5% of the confirmed Jefferson County cases never used mosquito repellent. Products with 10 percent or less DEET are recommended for children.
- **DRESS** in long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk or in areas where mosquitoes are active.

Anyone can get WNV – the mean age in Colorado in 2003 was 47 years and males and females of all ages were affected. WNV can be serious, however most people will not even know that they have been infected. Most infections are mild and symptoms include fever, headache and body aches. More severe cases may include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, muscle weakness or convulsions. Persons who experience symptoms should contact their health care provider immediately. WNV can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and lining of the brain).

For more information on West Nile Virus, contact Environmental Health Services at 303-271-5755. Colorado's statewide "Fight the Bite" toll-free helpline is 1-877-462-2911 or visit [www.fightthebitecolorado.com](http://www.fightthebitecolorado.com).