

Tailgate talk

Today's Subject:

West Nile virus

Date: _____

While some folks can quickly recover from West Nile virus, others – especially those over age 50 – are at risk of contracting West Nile encephalitis, which can be fatal, if they're bitten by an infected mosquito.

What to focus on

Here are four things to keep in mind in order to reduce the chances of being bitten by a mosquito infected with West Nile virus.

1. Dress appropriately.

When you know you'll be laboring outdoors in areas where mosquitoes could be breeding, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks, if possible.

2. Apply insect repellent.

Spray all exposed skin with insect repellent that has a DEET concentration of 35% or less. Spray repellent onto your clothing, too, because mosquitoes can bite through thin clothing.

3. Eliminate breeding grounds.

Because mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water, turn over, cover, or remove equipment such as tarps, buckets, or barrels where water can accumulate.

4. Pay extra attention during certain times.

Increase your vigilance at dawn and dusk, which are the times of day when mosquitoes are usually most active.