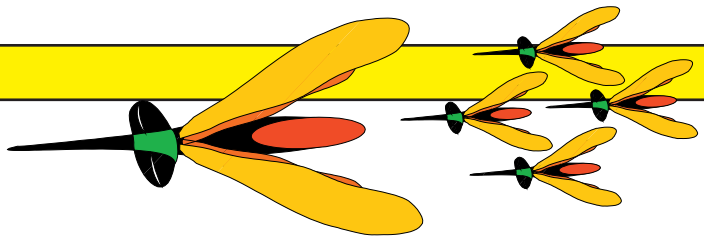
Petri Pest Control Fact Sheet

WEST NILE VIRUS



The West Nile Virus was first found in 1937 in the West Nile District of Uganda. It has since spread to the rest of Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and western and central Asia. The first outbreak in the United States occurred in 1999 in the northeast and has since been found in Florida. West Nile Virus is spread to people by infected mosquitoes. The virus can cause inflammation of the brain, known as encephalitis. This has been fatal in a few known cases, but most often is not. In the U.S., West Nile Virus is spreading westward by way of infected birds. Not only can mosquitoes spread the virus to birds, horses, and some other animals (cats, bats, chipmunks, skunks, squirrels, domestic rabbits, and raccoons) mosquitoes can also become infected when they feed on infected birds. It is important to note that birds and other animals cannot spread the virus to other animals or to people. Infected mosquitoes transmit West Nile virus to humans and animals while biting to take blood. The virus then multiplies in the blood and travels to the brain. It interferes with normal central nervous system functioning and causes inflammation of the brain. Cases of West Nile Virus or encephalitis occur mainly in the late Summer to early Fall but can occur year round in tropical climates such as South Florida.

With all this being said, it is important to remember that West Nile Virus is still very rare. Even in areas where mosquitoes carry the virus, less than 1% are infected. If a mosquito is infected, less than 1% of people who are bitten and become infected will become severely ill. The risk of sever illness is highest among people who are older than 50. Of those with severe illness, 3% to 15% become severely ill. Most infections are mild. Symptoms include fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with skin rash and swollen lymph glands. If the infection is more severe it may be marked by neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, and muscle weakness or paralysis.

REDUCING THE RISK

- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk and in the early evening if possible.
- If you walk for exercise at these times you may consider walking in a mall.
- Weather permitting in South Florida, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants to cover the skin.
- Apply effective insect repellant to clothing or exposed skin. Products should contain DEET at a rate no greater than 35% for adults and 10% for children. Avon "skin so soft" is also a good product for children.
- Avoid applying repellant to the hands of children since this may irritate the eyes and mouth. Also, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use, as printed on the product.
- Screens should be applied to doors and windows and regularly maintained to keep mosquitoes from entering the home.

WHAT CAN PETRI'S POSITIVE PEST CONTROL DO TO CONTROL MOSQUITOES AT MY HOME OR BUSINESS?

As a professional pest management company we can provide solutions to protect you, your family, and your environment. Firstly, Petri's can help greatly reduce biting adult mosquito populations by applying a residual insecticide to exterior areas where mosquitoes rest during the day such as trees, shrubs, shades areas, eaves, and overhangs. Secondly, Petri's can make recommendations to eliminate conducive conditions for mosquitoes such as standing water, birdbaths, clogged gutters, old tires, non-functioning fountains, garbage cans, and soil depressions.

For severe infestations, it will be necessary to contact the county mosquito control department who has people that can assist in locating and then treating mosquito-breeding sites with a product designed to control mosquito larvae.

This mosquito control service is a separate from Petri's regular pest control service. Please contact Petri's office for more information at (954) 781-4100.