West Nile Virus Fact Sheet

Why should the TAMIU community learn about West Nile Virus?
According to The City of Laredo Health Department there have been no confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus, but we do have the mosquito in Laredo and confirmed cases in canines increase the concern for potential risk.

How is it spread?
West Nile Virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. There is no recorded proof of it being passed from person-to-person, animal-to-animal, or animal-to-person.

How likely am I to be bitten by an infected mosquito?
Less than 1 percent of those bitten by infected mosquitoes become severely ill.

What are the symptoms?
Most people infected with West Nile Virus will not have any signs of illness. Twenty percent of people who become infected will have mild symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, and occasionally a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands.

The symptoms of severe infection (West Nile neuroinvasive disease) include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. Only about one out of 150 people infected with West Nile Virus will develop this more severe form of the disease.

The incubation period of West Nile Virus in humans is three to 14 days. Symptoms of mild disease may last a few days. Symptoms of severe disease may last several weeks, although neurological effects may be permanent. Rarely, death can occur.

What should you do if you have symptoms?
If you have symptoms mentioned in this fact sheet, contact your doctor immediately. Student Health Services (Student Center, Room 125; 326-2235) is also ready to assist.

How can I reduce my risk of infection?
Your best defense is to practice these habits, known as the “Four Ds”:

1. Stay indoors at Dusk and Dawn. This is the time of day that mosquitoes are most active.
2. Dress in long sleeves/pants, loose and light-colored clothing when you are outdoors.
3. Defend yourself from mosquitoes by using an insect repellent that contains DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Follow label instructions.
4. Drain standing water in your yard and neighborhood. Also make sure that flower pots, water dishes, bird baths, and wading pools are properly drained so they are not breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Where can I find more information?
The Department of State Health Services has a West Nile Virus website: www.txwestnile.org

This fact sheet is based on information provided by City of Laredo Health Department and Department of State Health Services. It will be updated regularly as new information is available. 8.24.12