



ARBOVIRUSES

What are arboviruses?

Arboviruses are viruses that are spread to people by insect or tick bites such as West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and St. Louis Encephalitis, Chikungunya, Dengue, Powassan, Yellow Fever, and Zika.

Who gets arboviruses?

Anyone can get an arbovirus, but young children and the elderly appear to be most affected and experience severe illness. People who travel or reside in areas where certain arboviruses are more prominent are at a higher risk to contract an arboviral disease. For example, Chikungunya is frequently found in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America while Powassan is found more in the northeastern and Great Lakes regions of the United States. Arboviruses in Delaware are rare but include West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and Zika.

How are arboviruses spread?

Infected mosquitoes are the most common type of insect that spread arboviral disease. Not all mosquitoes carry the disease. Other arboviral infections, such as Powassan, are transmitted through a bite of an infected tick. Other ways arboviral disease is transmitted through blood transfusions, organ transplants, sexual contact, and from mother to child during pregnancy or delivery.

What are the symptoms of arboviruses?

Symptoms of arboviruses can range from very mild to severe with most infected people experiencing no symptoms. Mild symptoms include a slight fever, headache, muscle, or joint pain, and/or a skin rash which can resolve without medical care. Severe infections can include headache, high fever, confusion, tremors, seizures, paralysis, coma, or death.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically appear from three to 14 days after a bite from an infected mosquito or tick. Symptoms can vary depending on the specific disease.

Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?

No exclusions are necessary for individuals infected with arboviruses. Consult with the Delaware Division of Public Health if there are any concerns. Contact the phone number at the bottom of the page.



What is the treatment for arboviruses?

There are no medications or treatments to treat arboviruses specifically. Health care providers usually give supportive care to help relieve symptoms. Supportive care includes fluid therapy and fever reducers.

What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of arboviruses?

Insect repellents can be effective at reducing bites from mosquitoes and ticks that spread the diseases. Mosquito control in and around your home and in the community is important to help decrease mosquitoes in your living area.

Follow these tips to reduce mosquitoes:

Outside the home:

- Remove standing water where mosquitoes lay eggs.
 - Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water: tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpot saucers, and trash containers.
 - Tightly cover water storage containers (buckets, cisterns, rain barrels) so mosquitoes cannot get inside to lay eggs.
 - For containers without lids, use wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.
 - Fill tree holes to prevent them from filling with water.
 - If you have a septic tank, repair cracks or gaps. Cover open vent or plumbing pipes using wire mesh with holes smaller than an adult mosquito.

Inside the home:

- Install or repair and use window and door screens.
- Close doors, including garage doors. Do not leave doors propped open.
- Use air conditioning when possible.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/yellowfever/index.html>