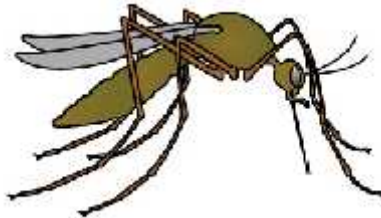




West Nile and Your Pet

With the heavy mosquito season, and the outbreak of West Nile Virus (WNV) in the Dallas/FW area, we have received many questions regarding West Nile and pets. We would like to thank Dr. Julie Ducoté, the local Veterinary Neurologist from the [Center for Veterinary Specialty Care](#), for providing us with information on the topic.



Can my pet contract WNV?

Only a few actual cases have been reported. Dogs show no clinical signs, while cats show non-specific signs such as a mild fever. Most often owners do not notice any changes, and both cats and dogs recover fully. There is no test for West Nile Virus in dogs or cats.

Can my pet spread WNV to me or my family?

Not likely. The virus is spread by building up in the bloodstream of an infected or carrier animal/person. A mosquito bites this animal/person, and picks up the virus, then bites someone else, infecting them. In infected dogs, the virus does not build up enough in the bloodstream to infect mosquitoes. Cats get a slightly higher buildup in the blood, but it is not thought to be high enough to spread the virus. Furthermore, being bitten by a dog or cat with WNV is considered a low risk, if any, for spreading the disease.

Is there a vaccine for WNV?

No, not for dogs and cats. There is also no specific treatment for WNV. It is a virus, and is treated much as we treat the flu, by managing symptoms and providing support (keeping hydrated, etc).

Can I use mosquito repellant on my pet?

DO NOT use Deet based repellants on pets. There is not an effective pet-safe repellant on the market. Area control (citronella, etc) is fine.

What about the area spraying?

Dr. Ducoté sites several CDC reports that illustrate the level of insecticide used in these sprayings is far below any level that might cause harm to pets. Because any pet can have a reaction to any medication or product, we do recommend keeping your pets inside during the spraying, but the risk of harm to you or your pet is low. It is also recommended to rinse clean any outdoor food and water bowls.

According to all this, there is very low risk that your pets will be affected by WNV. You may find more info about this at <http://www.centerforvetspecialtycare.com/>.

