# West Nile virus Q&A



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# 2026 is now a record West Nile virus season.

**As of 7 October, EU countries have reported 1 716 locally acquired human cases of West Nile virus infection, the highest number reported to date.**

**Italy and Greece account for the largest share, with 748 and 445 cases respectively.**

# No indication of increased disease severity.

Despite the record number of cases, there is currently no indication that West Nile virus is causing more severe disease this year.

The proportions of reported cases who were hospitalised, developed neurological symptoms or died remain below levels seen over the previous decade.

# West Nile virus is being detected in new areas.

## West Nile virus is continuing to expand into new parts of Europe.

**Recent detections in both people and animals in Belgium and the Netherlands show that the virus is now circulating further north.**

**This geographical expansion is expected to continue in the coming years.**

# West nile virus activity can vary.

## West Nile virus activity varies considerably from year to year and can be difficult to predict.

Temperature, rainfall and humidity can affect mosquito populations and virus transmission, while immunity in bird populations also plays a role.

This is why preparedness, early detection and mosquito control are always important.

# Most infections cause no symptoms.

## Most people infected with West Nile virus develop no symptoms.

## However, severe disease can occur, particularly in older adults and people with weakened immune systems.

## People living in or visiting areas where West Nile virus is circulating should protect themselves from mosquito bites.

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# Protect yourself from mosquito bites.

## In areas where West Nile virus is circulating:

- Use mosquito repellent.
- Wear loose-fitting, long clothing, particularly in the evening and at night.
- Use window screens, mosquito nets or air conditioning where appropriate.

These measures are particularly important for older adults and people with weakened immune systems, who are more likely to develop severe disease.

# Protecting people requires action at every level.

**West Nile virus circulates between mosquitoes and birds and can cause disease in people and horses.**

**That is why a broad One Health approach matters, spanning many sectors and areas of expertise. Personal protection, community action, and coordinated measures by public authorities all play a role.**

**Together, this can help reduce infections and the impact of West Nile virus in Europe.**

# Check ecdc.europa.eu for more information on West Nile virus



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