

# WEST NILE VIRUS (WNV)

## SPECIES AFFECTED

Equines and other mammals

## DESCRIPTION

The West Nile virus (WNV) is a strain of encephalitis disease, genetically similar to St. Louis encephalitis that can affect the central nervous system. WNV causes a swelling of the brain that, though treatable, can be fatal in a small portion of infected people and animals. The virus can be carried by birds and transmitted by mosquitoes that feed on an infected bird and then feed on a human or animal.

Some animals may not display any symptoms. Others may have a range of signs including fever, muscle spasms, weakness, lack of coordination, seizures and changes in temperament or personality.

For horses, signs of West Nile virus infection may include stumbling, weakness in hind limbs, inability to stand, paralysis of the limbs, listlessness and head shaking. In severe cases, horses may die or need to be euthanized.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

West Nile Virus is a mandatory reportable disease in Oregon.