

# West Nile

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West Nile Virus, Natural Pro-Active Nutritional Prevention, Nosodes and Homeopathic Treatments  
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West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne virus that was first detected in the United States in 1999. Since then, it has spread, according to 2005 statistics, to more than 44 US States. It was detected in all 23 counties in California in 2004. WNV was first identified as a cause of infection and fatal encephalomyelitis (inflammation of the spinal cord and brain) in horses and people in Egypt, Uganda, and France in the early 1960's.

"Episodes" of this disease in horses have occurred in places such as Morocco, Italy, and Asia as well as the United States. WNV is now being considered to be "endemic" (not epidemic) as there have been reported cases in most areas of North America. However, one needs to ask are horses really dying of this disease or are they being voluntarily euthanized due to people not having the time to be available to treat their animals, as well as the costs of allopathic care, for which there is no real WNV treatment available and seems to be a hit and miss sort of thing?

Most horse owner's are not aware that if a healthy horse should become infected, that horse can successfully be treated, for WNV, with homeopathic remedies given orally over a course of 3 to 4 days, at a cost of around \$50 to \$100. Of healthy horses infected, 2 out of every 3, who were not vaccinated, and who received no treatment do live, and with no residual effects!

## California Statistics

" According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, there have been 536 horse infections from 32 counties in 2004.

" Of these West Nile virus infected horses, 228 have been euthanized or died (with the majority being voluntarily euthanized).

" 3,230 dead birds tested positive for WNV in California in 2004.

" West Nile virus infected dead birds have been found in every county in California.

" The top 4 species affected by WNV are 1) American Crows 2) Western Scrub-Jays 3) Yellow-billed Magpies and 4) Steller's Jays

" In San Diego County, where I live, only two horses were infected, both in ill health prior to infection and older, and both were voluntarily euthanized.

## How It Spreads

Only birds are known to infect, or transmit, WNV to mosquitoes, after they have already been infected or exposed by a mosquito bite. The mosquitoes then spread the disease, by a bite from an infected mosquito to horses and humans, and other mammals. Horses and humans are considered the "dead-end hosts" of the West Nile virus, and cannot transmit the virus or contribute to the "transmission cycle". The virus is not directly contagious from horse to horse, horse to human, human to horse, human to human or any similar, or indirect transmission via mosquitoes from infected horses.

The incubation period for West Nile virus in horses appears to be between 3 to 15 days, following an infected mosquito bite. The statistics for mortality rate for horses exhibiting the clinical signs of West Nile virus infection is being stated at approximately 33%, or only 1 in 3 will die. To state that in a more positive note, 2 of every three horses infected with WNV will live! But to take that even one step further, the horses that do die are usually horses that were in poor health and condition to begin

with, under nourished, were very old or very young and their immune systems were compromised prior to exposure to WNV.

What seems to be happening, and being reported is the data is not accurate, as many owner's of horses exhibiting signs of the disease voluntarily euthanized their animals, even without confirming tests, because many allopathic vets have no current allopathic medicine to treat or cure the disease, nor do they give the owner's hope for a good outcome.

Risk of exposure and geographic distribution of WNV will vary from year to year with changes in distribution of insects who carry the virus. Some of these changes in distribution of the disease seem to be due to various weather pattern changes and or wetter then normal winters and springs in some areas. Because of the unpredictable nature of those factors and the effects of the disease, it has been "recommended" that all horses in North America be immunized against West Nile virus.

Now ask yourself, "who" is recommending that this be done? You probably guessed it, it is the marketing and ad companies of the pharmaceutical companies who developed the vaccine, as well as some of the vet's who stand to profit from giving the vaccine. We all need to remember that this is an "endemic" disease not an "epidemic", and a healthy horse for the most part can over-come this virus, even if they had not been vaccinated, with no ill effects.

Clinical Signs of West Nile Virus in Horses

The clinical signs associated with WNV infection can vary from horse to horse, and may mimic many neurological disorders in varying degrees. These include: rabies, EPM (equine protozoal myeloencephalitis), equine herpesvirus-1, botulism; Eastern, Western and Venezuelan encephalomyelitis (EEE,WEE,VEE); heat stress, trauma; bacterial meningitis, Wobbler Syndrome, and equine degenerative myelopathy.

Some of the symptoms may include:

- " Fever, but not in all cases
- " Stumbling or in-coordination
- " Depression
- " Apprehension
- " Stupor
- " Behavioral changes
- " Weakness of limbs
- " Tremors and difficulty rising &/or inability to rise
- " Convulsions
- " Blindness or blindness like symptoms
- " Colic
- " Intermittent lameness

" And even death for horses who are already immune compromised, as in very old horses or very young sickly foals, or horses who have been over vaccinated or over chemically wormed

Healthy horses may become infected without showing any clinical signs. Fever is not a common sign but may be present. Drooling from the mouth or runny nose has also been seen. The key is to keep a watchful eye on your horses and note any unusual behavior. The course of this infection, if treated with homeopathic remedies, is usually 3-4 days, and requires giving the homeopathic remedies numerous times until there is a lessening of the symptoms.

Protecting Your Animals Nutritionally

It is important to take preventive actions early, prior to the time of the year when mosquitoes are likely to bite and infect horses in your area. Make sure your horse is receiving adequate nutrition to keep him healthy. Boosting your horse's immune system with the appropriate supplements including Vitamin C, Equine Missing Link, Beta Glucan 1,3 and Colostrum is also very helpful and appropriate. The combination of the Beta Glucan & Colostrum is one of the most powerful immune boosting supplements you can provide for your horse, and a 20 gram scoop per day can be inexpensive, and

health/immune enhancing.

Adding Garlic as well as ¼ cup Apple Cider Vinegar (preferably organic) to their feed will assist in naturally repelling mosquitoes (and flies), as will using a natural citronella/lanolin based insect repellent such as Pyranaha in the evenings, or Larry's Natural Fly Spray with a cap full of Avon's Skin So Soft, which we use here in So. Cal.

To Vaccinate or Not Vaccinate Your Horses

In November 2002, a vaccine intended to aid in the prevention of WNV in horses was licensed by the Veterinary Services division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. This is a killed vaccine product, and its use was originally restricted to licensed veterinarians, but is now available at feed stores in California and elsewhere for consumer use. There were, and have been many reports of side effects up to and including pregnant mares aborting foals, numerous still births, foal deformities; mares who have trouble conceiving after vaccination, stallion with infertility issues, and the list goes on.

A committee has been formed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners, to review the reports of the health related problems that have occurred in numerous horses regarding this vaccine. "This Task Force Committee stresses that each individual vaccination situation must be evaluated based on the risk of disease, potential for adverse reactions to a vaccine, anticipated efficacy of the selected product and cost."

Be Proactive / Be an Informed Consumer

Be an informed consumer, don't just vaccinate because the media is playing up the threat of West Nile, and the vet pharmaceuticals are heavily advertising their vaccines playing on the public's fear factor! Consider using Nosodes instead.

Don't believe the statistics, question them, call your local health departments or veterinary colleges or veterinary hospitals, because voluntary euthanasia does not mean the horse died of the disease, the euthanasia occurred because the vets are telling people there is no cure, therefore giving horse owner's little hope and un-informed consumers are needlessly putting down animals that could overcome the virus with a little extra care, homeopathic remedies, and a better immune system from better nutritional practices.

Be realistic, and weigh the evidence as well as the area in which you live to determine the risk factors. A horse with a healthy immune system and proper nutrition can naturally fight off a virus such as West Nile and would not have any noticeable symptoms for the most part when he recovered. Talk to your vet and if the risk is too high then vaccinate but also re-evaluate your feeding practices and supplement program to make sure your horse is healthier and has a good immune system.

If you choose to vaccinate, for your horses to be protected by vaccination, they should receive the second of two initial doses of the currently licensed vaccine at least 2 weeks before mosquitoes are likely to start biting and infect them, however you should also then give them probiotic and horse specific digestive enzyme supplements, such as found in Pro-Zyme" by Earth Song Ranch, to naturally rebuild their intestinal flora and their immune system.

Many veterinarians, in Southern states where mosquitoes are active year-round, prefer to vaccinate horses semiannually or more frequently to help ensure uniform protection throughout the year, although this practice is not specifically recommended by manufacturers of vaccines.

If you choose not to vaccinate, your horse should be on supplemental Beta Glucan, Colostrum, Missing Link and an assortment of immune boosting herbs, including Garlic, as well as giving him a monthly homeopathic Nosode specifically for West Nile. The Nosode is given monthly and is in a dose of 15 sugar pills about the size of a pencil tip, they can be dissolved and syringed in to the mouth or the tiny pellets can be put directly on the gum. The cost to immunize with a WNV Nosode is \$20 for three horses, total, for a year.

What is a Nosode

Nosodes are really homeopathic "immunizations" as opposed to "vaccinations". They are made the very same way as a homeopathic remedy, by dilution, and succussion, except they are made from the "discharges" when an organism (animal or human) gets sick. For example, a distemper Nosode is made from the nasal discharge from an infected dog, a Parvo Nosode is made from the diarrhea of an infected animal, and the EPM Nosode is made from the spinal cord of an EPM positive horse. Using a homeopathic West Nile Nosode in place of vaccines has been shown to also prevent the disease, as it "immunizes" your horses safely as opposed to chemically "vaccinating" them. The West Nile Nosode and homeopathic treatment for horses infected with West Nile is available through [www.holisticvetclinic.net](http://www.holisticvetclinic.net). They ship priority mail and from Florida to California usually only takes a couple of days to receive. The directions for usage of the Nosode are simple and it is very cost effective, as a 1 dram bottle will treat 3 horses for one year at a cost of \$20.00.

I do not know of any allopathic treatment available for WNV, once a horse becomes infected, however, there are homeopathic remedies that do treat WNV effectively with no side affects and are available from [www.holisticvetclinic.net](http://www.holisticvetclinic.net).

Prevention:

Reduce Mosquito Breeding Sites

You can decrease the chance of your animals being exposed to the West Nile virus by limiting their exposure to mosquitoes. The best way to do this is to reduce mosquito-breeding sites. Mosquitoes can breed in any puddle that lasts more than 4 days. The best way to reduce your risk is to remove any potential sources of standing water in which breeding can take place.

" Dispose of water-holding containers such as old tires.

" Drill holes in the bottom of containers that are left outside.

" Thoroughly clean watering troughs, bird baths, etc., every few days.

" Clean clogged roof gutters every year.

" Turn over wading pools or wheelbarrows when not in use, and do not let water stagnate in bird baths.

" Aerate ornamental pools.

" Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not in use and do not let water collect on pool covers.

" Use landscaping to eliminate low spots where standing water can collect.

Preventive management practices may also help to minimize the risk of the spread and transmission of West Nile virus from infected mosquitoes. Reduction of mosquito numbers and exposure can be achieved by reducing or eliminating any stagnant or standing water in your area, removing old tires, keeping horses in the barns from dusk to dawn (prime mosquito feeding times), setting out mosquito traps, keeping air moving with fans, and removing organic debris (muck) promptly. Chemical controls may include the use of topical anti-mosquito repellent or fly sprays.

About the Author:

Jessica Lynn is an author, researcher and founder of Earth Song Ranch, LLC, a licensed natural feed and supplement manufacturer and distributor based in Southern California. She works with a team of consultants when she designs and tests formulas, especially for specific disorders. Jessica has been involved in alternative health care for almost 45 years, not only for herself, and her family, but also for her animals, including horses, border collies and cats. She resides in San Diego County, with her Arabian Horses, puppy pals and feline friends. Jessica may be contacted at [Jessica@earthsongranch.com](mailto:Jessica@earthsongranch.com) or via snail mail at: P.O. Box 2616, San Marcos, CA 92079-2616. Her web site is [www.earthsongranch.com](http://www.earthsongranch.com)

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