

## Remember...

The yard that is  
neater beats the  
'skeeter.'



Photo courtesy of the WV  
Department of Environmental  
Protection

Contact The Division of Infectious  
Disease Epidemiology for more  
information.

### **Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology**

Bureau for Public Health  
West Virginia Department of Health and  
Human Resources  
350 Capitol Street, Room 125  
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Phone: (304) 558-5358

Toll-Free: 1-800-423-1271

[www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeeps/disease](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeeps/disease)

or

Contact your local health department.

## La Crosse Encephalitis

### Preventing La Crosse Encephalitis in West Virginia



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Department of Health & Human Resources

## La Crosse Encephalitis

La Crosse encephalitis (LAC) is a disease spread by mosquitoes.

LAC usually affects children under age 16; however, older people can also be affected. Most people get sick with LAC between June and October, when the mosquitoes are most active.

Signs of illness occur 5-15 days after the mosquito bite. Signs of illness are:

- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stiff neck
- Drowsiness
- Confusion

People with any of these signs of illness should see a healthcare provider.

LAC can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). Serious infections could cause seizures and comas. Some people with LAC may show behavior changes. People that have LAC usually have to stay in the hospital while they are sick.

About 79 cases are reported each year in the United States. West Virginia usually has about 13 LAC cases reported each year, more than many other states.



Data available from CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/lac/tech/epi.html>

The following mosquito species live in West Virginia and can spread LAC: Eastern Treehole Mosquito (*Aedes triseriatus*), Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*), and the Asian Bush Mosquito (*Aedes japonicus*).

These mosquitoes multiply in containers that hold water. Their natural habitat is holes in trees and rocks, but old tires, rain barrels, wading pools, buckets, concrete basins and any container that can hold water are good places for mosquitoes to multiply.



Photo courtesy of the WV Department of Environmental Protection

## How to Prevent La Crosse Encephalitis

Prevent LAC by reducing the number of mosquitoes. Remove anything that can hold water from your yard and where children play. Take the proper steps to avoid mosquito bites.

- **Secure, intact screens** should be placed on windows and doors so mosquitoes cannot get inside homes.
- Use **mosquito repellents** containing DEET, picaridin, IR<sub>3535</sub>, or oil of eucalyptus **on children** before they play outdoors. Oil of eucalyptus should not be used on children less than 3 years old.
- **NEVER** put repellents on the **face of children**. Wash children with soap and warm water when they come back inside to remove traces of the repellent.
- **Carefully read and follow the directions** listed on repellents.
- **Wear long sleeves, pants, and socks** when weather allows.
- Do not go outside **between dawn and dusk** without protection from mosquitoes.