



Our Insect Enemies



West Nile Virus May Spread Farther

(NAPSA)—As the weather warms up and mosquito season begins, a new report finds that most Americans surveyed (88 percent) are only somewhat knowledgeable about the diseases carried by mosquitoes.

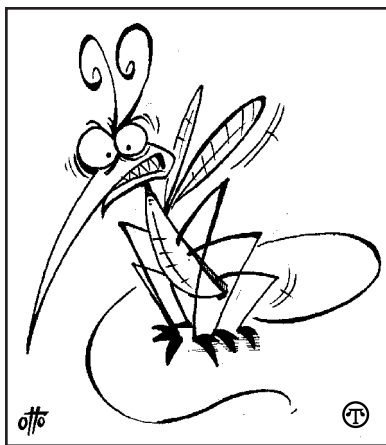
According to the new OFF! Mosquito Watch Report, 59 percent of Americans have heard or read about West Nile virus. Even though they know about the disease, only 27 percent are somewhat familiar with the symptoms and only 21 percent are confident about how to protect themselves.

West Nile virus, which causes encephalitis, is a serious disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes. It was first seen in the United States in 1999 and is particularly dangerous to the elderly and people with a compromised immune system. There have been 149 confirmed human cases of West Nile virus, including 18 deaths, by the end of 2001.

Early symptoms of West Nile can include headache, fever, skin rash, disorientation, chills and body aches. Symptoms usually appear three to 15 days after a bite from an infected mosquito.

According to Dr. Jonathon Day, professor of Medical Entomology at the University of Florida, although the likelihood of a person contracting West Nile virus remains small, the virus could potentially spread farther this year than in previous years. "However, people should still protect themselves against bites from mosquitoes that may carry West Nile virus by taking various preventative measures on skin that is exposed, including using a DEET-based insect repellent."

To help reduce the risk of mosquito bites, Dr. Day suggests the



Avoid mosquito bites by using repellents and wearing long-sleeves and long pants.

following:

- **Take Cover.** Wear long sleeve shirts and pants.
- **Deter with DEET.** Use a DEET-based repellent such as the OFF! line of personal repellents when spending time outdoors.
- **Add Protection.** Make sure all shirts have wrist closures. Tuck pant legs into socks. Spray DEET-based repellent on clothing to help fend off mosquitoes.
- **Avoid Prime Biting Times.** Avoid being outside at dusk, dawn, nighttime hours, and periods of heavy cloud cover and humidity.
- **Break-Up Breeding.** Eliminate standing water where mosquitoes breed. Drain kiddie pools and bird baths regularly and check to see that rain gutters drain properly.
- **Monitor Mosquito Alerts.** Watch for public advisories concerning encephalitis alerts.

People, who are unsure of West Nile virus symptoms or how to protect themselves, can visit