

## West Nile Virus (WNV)

**Hazards:** West Nile Virus is a mosquito borne illness found in all parts of the United States. Most infections are asymptomatic but 1 in 5 infected people may experience headache, body aches, joint and muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and rash. Approximately 1 in 150 infected people may develop serious illness, including inflammation of the brain and spinal cord. Symptoms of severe illness include high fever, headache, disorientation, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, and paralysis. There are no vaccines to prevent WNV in people; treatment is supportive.

**Risks:** Transmission occurs through a bite from an infected mosquito, an accidental needle stick, and inhalation of infectious aerosols. After administration to the animals, the risk of exposure to West Nile Virus from handling the animals during cage change or bedding disposal is low.

**Precautions:** Wear PPE during cage changes (gloves, gown, and booties). Use a biosafety cabinet during cage changes. Follow ABSL-2 procedures for bedding disposal. Wash hands after work.

**Emergency Response:** In the event of an accidental needlestick, stop working, wash the injured area for 15 minutes, tell your supervisor, and report to Occupational Medicine. If you are working in this area and develop symptoms, tell your supervisor and report to Occupational Medicine. Potential exposures and illnesses must be reported to EHRS by your supervisor or manager.