

Arboviral Infections

Fact Sheet



Maine Center for Disease
Control and Prevention

An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services

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What are arboviruses?

Arboviruses (**Ar**thropod-**bor**ne **vir**uses) are viruses that are primarily spread by blood-feeding arthropods like mosquitoes and ticks. These viruses cause diseases in humans such as West Nile virus, Eastern equine encephalitis and Powassan encephalitis.

How do people get these diseases?

Arboviruses are spread to people through the bite of infected mosquitoes and ticks. In a small number of cases, arboviruses have been spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, breast milk, and during pregnancy from mother to baby. These infections are not spread through casual contact such as kissing or drinking from an infected person's glass.

What are the symptoms of an arboviral infection?

The symptoms of arboviral infections can range from very mild to very severe. The majority of people infected by these viruses either do not show any symptoms or experience mild fever, head and body aches, and a lack of energy. More severe symptoms can include high fever, stiff neck, tremors, altered mental status, inflammation of the brain, respiratory distress, paralysis, coma and death.

How soon do symptoms of arboviral infections occur?

Depending on the disease, symptoms usually occur between 3 to 18 days after infection.

When do most arboviral infections occur?

Most arboviral infections occur during the late spring through early fall when mosquitoes and ticks are most active. In the warmer parts of the United States arboviral infections can occur year-round.

Who is at risk for arboviral infections?

Anyone can be infected with an arbovirus. The risk is highest for people who spend a lot of time outdoors where they can be bitten by mosquitoes and ticks. Severe symptoms are more likely to occur in children or the elderly.

How are arboviral infections diagnosed?

Arboviral infections can only be diagnosed by a healthcare provider. If arboviral infection is suspected, samples of blood and cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) will be collected and sent to a laboratory for diagnosis.

What is the treatment for arboviral infection?

There is no specific treatment for arboviral infections. People with mild infections usually recover on their own. Healthcare providers can provide supportive therapy to patients with severe infections.

Are there vaccines to prevent arboviral infections in the United States?

Currently there are no human vaccines available to prevent the arboviral infections found in the United States.

How can I protect myself from arboviral infection?

The best way to prevent arboviral infection is to avoid being bitten by the mosquitoes and ticks that spread these diseases.

- Use an EPA approved repellent
- Wear protective clothing when outdoors
- Check for ticks on your body after being outdoors
- Empty or drain water-holding containers around your house
- Reduce the number of items that could hold water from your yard
- Keep vegetation around your house from becoming overgrown

Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by calling 1-800-821-5821 or visiting the website <http://www.mainepublichealth.gov>. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - <http://www.cdc.gov> – is another excellent source of health information.