

West Nile Virus: Human Cases

Q: How many cases of West Nile disease in humans have occurred in the U.S.?

A: Our Statistics, Surveillance, and Control page contains maps showing the distribution of West Nile virus-related human disease cases, by state, in the U.S. in 2003.

In 2002, there were 4156 human cases of WNV disease, including 284 deaths. Cases were reported throughout much of the US. In 2001, there were 66 human cases of severe disease and 9 deaths. In 2000, 21 cases were reported, including 2 deaths in the New York City area. In 1999, 62 cases of severe disease, including 7 deaths, occurred in the New York area.

There are no reliable estimates available for the number of cases of West Nile encephalitis that occur worldwide.

Q: What proportion of people with severe illness due to West Nile virus die?

A: Among those with severe illness due to West Nile virus, case-fatality rates range from 3% to 15% and are highest among the elderly.

Less than 1% of people who become infected with West Nile virus will develop severe illness -- most people who get infected do not develop any disease at all.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/westnile, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)