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Industrial Insurance Agency

August 14th, 2012 TIPS FOR TUESDAY™

West Nile Virus Strikes 42 States, Including Illinois

Many states across the country are reporting higher than normal cases of West Nile virus. Thus far in 2012, 42 states have reported a total of 241 cases of West Nile virus infections in people to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is the highest number of cases reported through the end of July since 2004, according to the CDC. The high count is attributed in large part to the much higher than average number of infected mosquitoes, brought on by the mild winter, early spring and very hot summer we've experienced this year. Illinois is reporting higher rates of infected mosquitoes compared with past years.

Should I be concerned?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

West Nile can affect anyone, but the very young, the elderly and those already ill are at a higher risk for infection.

People who work or spend a lot of time outdoors should be aware of mosquito bites and take preventive measures to avoid being bitten.

Four out of five people who get West Nile won't get sick, but 1 out of 150 with the virus will develop a severe case.

What are the symptoms?

Most cases that occur are mild. However, you should contact your physician or consider going to the emergency room if you have:

A fever higher than 103° F

Confusion

Chest pressure

Difficulty breathing

Severe vomiting

Diarrhea

What can I do?

Wear an insect repellent, preferably one with DEET, when outdoors.

Avoid being outdoors between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are biting.
Install or repair screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
Drain standing water to eliminate breeding habitats.
Keep pools, saunas and hot tubs chlorinated.
Wear light-colored clothes when outdoors, and dress in long sleeves and long pants if possible.

Back-to-School Lessons for Parents

Some parents say they're advocating for their child. Others say they're just keeping a watchful eye. No matter how they describe it, parents who are too involved can cause problems.

Traits of these parents (sometimes called "helicopter" parents) might include arguing with teachers to have grades changed, micro-managing play dates, and considering themselves their child's best friend.

Not everyone agrees that parents can be too involved. In fact, a recent study of educators noted that, "Dealing with overzealous parents was an even greater challenge than maintaining classroom discipline." And some experts say

excess attention may leave kids unhappy and unable to form their own values. In the quest to create a perfect world for children, helicopter parents might be doing them an injustice.

If you tend to hover, there's good news. It's not too late for a safe landing. You can find the right balance between providing advocacy and support on one hand and teaching your child's independence and problem-solving skills on the other hand. These tips can help:

- **Give yourself a time-out.** Before you question the teacher, bring the forgotten lunch or homework to school, or sign your child up for something without asking him, take a breath. Ask yourself if your child really needs you to do this for him. Consider the learning experience that may result if you don't act. This could be the lesson that teaches your child to remember to double-check he has everything before leaving for school.
- **Balance your reaction with common sense.** Your child didn't share with a friend during a play date? Don't blow your top and stop playdates until age 30. Instead, talk with your child about your family's rules for sharing and your expectations.
- **View failure as an opportunity for growth.** Remember that the painful moments provide children with a better understanding of who they are and how they need to do better.

Stopping a Nosebleed

Q. I occasionally get nosebleeds. What's the best way to stop them?

Nosebleeds can sometimes look more serious than they actually are. The good news is that most - in adults and children - can be treated at home.

To stop a nosebleed:

- Try to stay calm. Being upset may make the bleeding worse.
- Sit down - but don't lie down. Bleeding slows when your head is above your heart.
- Lean forward a bit - never back. This will help you avoid swallowing blood.
- Use your thumb and index finger to firmly pinch the lower, soft part of your nose. Don't put tissues or gauze into your nose.

- Hold your nose for 10 minutes without stopping.
- If bleeding continues, you might try gently blowing the nose to remove any clots. Then, pinch your nose for another 10 minutes.

Once the bleeding stops, being careful can help it from starting again. For example, don't vigorously blow your nose, bend over, lift anything heavy or do strenuous activity.

If you're still bleeding after 20 or 30 minutes, call your doctor. Also, be sure to seek medical care if the bleeding is caused by an injury.

Nosebleeds are often the result of overly dry nasal membranes - and can be caused by allergies or colds, as well. They can also be a side effect of certain medicines - or the sign of a health problem. If your nosebleeds are a frequent problem, talk with your doctor.

And, if you have a bleeding disorder - or take medicine that increases the risk of bleeding - ask your doctor how you should handle nosebleeds or other injuries.

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