

# Health Matters

## Natural Paths to Healthier Living

The Georgetown Naturopathic Wellness Centre

Spring/Summer 2003

## PROTECT YOURSELF THIS SUMMER

Experts are predicting an epidemic of West Nile Virus (WNV) this summer. All areas of Canada are expected to experience a spike in the number of WNV cases, according to Dr. Harvey Artsob, Chief of Zoonotic Diseases at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne virus. 70 to 80% of those who become infected display no symptoms. However, in 20% of the population it results in flu like symptoms, which include fever, headache and body aches. Most of those affected will make a full recovery. In less than 1% of the cases, it results in severe illness such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord). Death occurs in very rare cases. There is a 5 to 15 day incubation period in humans. Those at increased risk include people over 50, people with pre-existing chronic illnesses, the very young or those with a compromised immune system. In reality, anyone is at risk considering that last year's cases included some healthy middle-aged adults.

In general, WNV is transmitted by mosquitoes who feed on birds, horses and other animals as well as humans. The mosquito typically becomes a WNV carrier by biting an infected bird, after which it can infect other birds, horses, and people. Keep in mind that less than 1% of mosquitoes are carriers of WNV. Last year, there were 307 confirmed cases of WNV in Ontario, a figure some experts think may actually be as high as 1000. To date, 17 Ontarians are known to have died from WNV.

## RECIPE

Here is one of my favorite summer recipes:

### Grilled Vegetable Salad

1 each yellow and green zucchini  
1 each yellow, orange, and red sweet peppers  
1 red onion  
1 eggplant  
1 cup cherry tomatoes  
10 to 15 mushrooms (if big, slice in half)  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
enough oil to coat vegetables

### Dressing

1 tbsp chopped fresh tarragon  
1 tbsp lemon juice  
1 to 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
1 clove garlic minced  
pinch of salt and pepper to taste  
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced  
¼ cup olive oil  
¼ cup pine nuts

Cut vegetables lengthwise into one half inch thick slices. In a large bowl whisk together garlic and oil, add to vegetables and toss to coat.

Place vegetables in a steel basket and grill over medium heat, turning occasionally for 10 minutes or until just tender-crisp. Let cool on cutting board and then cut into bite size pieces.

In a large bowl combine tarragon, lemon juice, vinegar, garlic, salt, pepper, and nuts, gradually whisk in oil. Add vegetables, stir to coat. Tastes great same day or let it marinate overnight in the refrigerator.

## How to Reduce the Risk!!!!

Prevention is always an integral part of health. Prevention can be done on a number of levels through boosting your immune system, creating an environment not conducive to mosquitoes and using a good and safe repellent.

### *How do I help my immune system against WNV?*

Proper Nutrition and Balanced Lifestyle:

- ✓ Ensure good rest.
- ✓ Engage in stress reduction which may include massage, meditation and focused breathing. Remember emotional stress can depress the immune system.
- ✓ Eat a balance diet of at least 6 servings of fruit and vegetables, limit refined foods (sugar, white flour, processed foods, coffee).
- ✓ Drink 1 to 2 liters of water per day.

Consider taking these supplements:

- ✓ Acidophilus: 2 caps/day
- ✓ Maxum Multivit: 2 caps/day
- ✓ Antioxidant: 2 caps/ day

These supplements will help to support a healthy immune system.

Homeopathic Remedies used as prevention for WNV:

- ✓ Ledum and Gelsinium: 2 pellets per day



**REMEMBER:** Do not allow mosquitoes a breeding environment (i.e. stagnant water). Avoid mosquitoes by wearing protective clothing and not staying outside at dusk.



Use natural insect repellants:

- ✓ VitB1 (250 mg per day will change the chemistry of your sweat which will repel mosquitoes)
- ✓ Catnip/Citronella (the clinic has a new product ask us!! The research looks promising - no DEET)

### NOTE ON DEET

Insect repellants with a high concentration of DEET are effective, however DEET is a toxic compound. DEET is not a natural product and the research behind DEET is focused primarily on the insect repellent properties not the long-term health risks. There are numerous precautions around the use of DEET products due to potential risks and side effects of its use, especially prolonged or continued use. The percentage of reported side effects is not high, but the known toxic effects of DEET products are of greatest risk to children because of the increased absorption through the skin. These range from mild allergic skin reactions to nervous system problems.

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**Welcome to Genevieve Stewart.** Gen is a registered massage therapist. She brings with her lots of experience and magic hands. Please call Gen at 416-779-4402 for an appointment.

*Yours in good health,*

The Georgetown Naturopathic

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