



## Top Medical-related WNV Questions

### **1. What can individuals who are immunologically compromised do to protect themselves from chemical exposure from aerial and ground spraying?**

A number of medical conditions can cause someone to be immunocompromised. Because these conditions may or may not carry specific risks, it is important for individuals with specific questions related to their medical condition consult their personal physician to advise them and provide guidance on their risks for both West Nile Virus infection and potential insecticide exposure.

### **What is being done to ensure the safety of these individuals who already are ill and suffering from immune compromises?**

In general, most medical conditions that cause individuals to be at an increased risk for infections or to be immunocompromised do not make them more likely to have problems with the insecticide being applied during aerial or ground spraying. Again, individuals with specific questions related to their medical conditions should consult with their physician.

### **2. What are the symptoms of a neurological or other reaction to pesticides?**

In general, neurological symptoms observed during insecticide exposure occur at concentrations much, much higher than what will be used for aerial and ground spraying applications. There are

no reports of neurological symptoms occurring in individuals who live in areas that regularly have aerial spray applications.

**What should I do if I suspect I or someone else is having a negative response to the pesticides?**

Any concern related to symptoms or side effects should be addressed either by an individual's primary care physician, or, if the symptoms are severe enough, a visit to an emergency department. In other areas in the United States in which aerial spraying is conducted, there are no reports of increased rates of people experiencing signs or symptoms of a severe insecticide exposure.

**3. Is it safe for my children and pets to be in the yard or at the park after aerial spraying?**

In general, it is safe, as the concentrations being dispersed by ground and aerial sprays are very small. A person is likely to come into contact with greater concentrations of insecticide if handling pet flea products or hair lice removal shampoo. However, as an added precaution, staying inside during the spray application is a good idea.

**Does the residue built up on plants or play structures pose a threat to my child?**

Sunlight significantly breaks down the insecticide chemical, and almost all of the chemical never touches the ground because it is so widely dispersed. So, any residue after a spray application would be negligible, and it will be safe for children to play outside the next day.

**4. Although the short-term effect of pesticides on human health may not be obvious, what research do you have to support the long-term safety of using these products?**

The potential short-term effects have been well studied after applications of insecticide elsewhere. Although the long-term effects are not as well studied, to date no research has indicated any significant consequence to being exposed to insecticides at the concentrations used for aerial or ground spraying. Most of an individual's long-term insecticide exposure will come from sources other than aerial or ground spraying applications. Household products such as pet flea products and hair lice removal shampoo have much higher concentrations of the chemicals used for spraying.

**5. What risk is there of pesticide exposure causing short- and long-term respiratory problems, nervous system disruption, cancer, and reproductive issues?**

To date, there have been no studies indicating an increased risk of any medical conditions such as nervous system disorders, cancer or reproductive issues. People with specific concerns are advised to follow up with their personal physicians.

**6. I had an exterminator come to my house and we had to leave while they worked. What makes these pesticides and the application safe compared to those used by my exterminator?**

The pesticides used by household exterminators are sprayed at much higher concentrations than what will be used during aerial spraying. Also, because exterminators are applying these chemicals in a more confined environment, such as your home, it

makes sense that the recommendation is to leave the house for a period of time to allow the pesticide to dissipate to safe levels.

**7. If I am caught outside during the ground or aerial spray, what should I do to remove the pesticides from my clothes and body?**

Don't worry. While it is suggested that individuals stay indoors during the spray applications, the actual concentrations one would likely come into contact with, even if outdoors at the time, would be very small. Just shower with soap and water, and wash your clothes in your usual laundry detergent.

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