

Infections of West Nile virus could set U.S. record

September 28 2012, by Michael C. Purdy

This year, infections with West Nile virus are on pace to be one of the worst years yet. Scientists speculate, but cannot yet prove, that the surge in infections may be attributable to warm spring temperatures across much of the country, which allowed the mosquitoes that spread the virus to begin breeding early.

For most people, West Nile infections do not cause symptoms. But in people 50 and older and those with weakened immune systems, West Nile can potentially become life-threatening. Infection rates tend to peak in July, August and September, but the season can continue well into the fall, especially in warmer regions.

[West Nile virus](#) expert Michael Diamond, MD, PhD, professor of [infectious diseases](#) and of medicine at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, is working to develop better treatments for the virus. He talks about this year's West Nile [virus infections](#) and offers tips for avoiding the virus.

Provided by Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

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