



West Nile Fever

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Why in News?

The detection of [West Nile fever](#) in 3 Kerala districts has prompted health authorities to issue alerts and intensify preventive measures.

What is West Nile Fever?

▪ About:

- It is caused by the **West Nile virus (WNV)**, a single-stranded RNA virus that is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito (*Mosquitoes of the genus Culex* are generally considered the principal vectors of WNV) and Birds serve as reservoir hosts.
 - The virus is a member of the **Flaviviridae family and the flavivirus genus.**
- The virus is commonly found in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and West Asia.
- It was first isolated in a woman in the West Nile district of Uganda in 1937. It was identified in birds in the **Nile Delta region in 1953**, according to the [World Health Organization](#).

▪ Transmission:

- Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds, subsequently transmitting the **virus to humans and animals through bites.**
- The virus may also be transmitted through **contact with other infected animals, their blood, or other tissues.**
- Rare cases of transmission through organ transplant, blood transfusions, and transplacental transmission.
- **No human-to-human transmission of WNV through casual contact has been documented.**

▪ Symptoms:

- Asymptomatic in about 80% of cases.
- Symptoms of West Nile fever include **fever, headache, tiredness, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and skin rash.**
- Severe cases may lead to neurological symptoms such as **neck stiffness, stupor, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis.**

▪ Treatment

- Supportive care for neuro-invasive cases involves hospitalization, intravenous fluids, and respiratory support.
- **No vaccine is available for humans.**

▪ India's Initiatives:

- [National Vector-Borne Disease Control Programme.](#)
- [Integrated Vector Management \(IVM\).](#)
- [National Framework for Malaria Elimination.](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. In tropical regions, Zika virus disease is transmitted by the same mosquito that transmits dengue.
2. Sexual transmission of Zika virus disease is possible.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (c)

Q. 'Wolbachia method' is sometimes talked about with reference to which one of the following? (2023)

- (a) Controlling the viral diseases spread by mosquitoes
- (b) Converting crop residues into packing material
- (c) Producing biodegradable plastics
- (d) Producing biochar from thermo-chemical conversion of biomass

Ans: (a)

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