



Hawaii State Department of Health

Disease Investigation Branch

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Arboviral Infections

What are arboviral infections?

Arboviral infections are a family of viral diseases that cause a variety of illnesses. Some cause infection of the brain and spinal cord, and the soft tissues surrounding them. Others cause illnesses with fever and rash, blood system disorders, hepatitis, and muscle pain. Arboviruses are not generally present in Hawaii.

Some arboviruses include:

- St. Louis encephalitis
- West Nile virus (see separate fact sheet)
- Powassan virus
- Eastern equine encephalitis
- Western equine encephalitis
- Dengue fever (see separate fact sheet)

How do you get it?

You can get arboviral infections from mosquitoes, ticks, and certain types of flies that feed on blood. Everyone is susceptible to arboviral infections, but some arboviral infections are more severe in young children or the elderly.

What are the symptoms of arboviral infections?

Persons infected with a particular virus frequently have no symptoms at all or report only mild illness. Others will have only a low fever and/or headache. However, in serious arboviral infections, the symptoms can include a severe headache with high fever, confusion, tremors, seizures, paralysis, coma, or even death.

When do symptoms start?

Depending on the specific type of arbovirus, the symptoms can start 2 to 15 days following the bite from an infected mosquito, tick, or blood-feeding fly.

What is the treatment for arboviral infections?

Other than trying to make the patient comfortable, there is no specific treatment for arboviral infections.

Should an infected person stay away from work or school?

No. There is no direct transmission of arboviruses from person to person.

If you get an arboviral infection once, can you get it again?

No. Infection with an arbovirus gives protection against that specific virus, and perhaps against similar viruses.

How can you keep from getting it?

- Avoid exposure to mosquitoes and flies during the hours of their highest activity, usually in the early morning and early evening hours. Use mosquito nets over beds and screens on windows and doors.
- Wear light colored long sleeved shirts and long pants and use insect repellents when outdoors in mosquito, fly or tick-infested areas.
- Institute mosquito and insect control programs by draining containers or by spraying areas where insects may breed.

For more information, see the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/arbor/index.htm>