



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Update on West Nile Virus (WNV) in the Americas

USA: During the week running from 23–29 October 2003, a total of 332 human cases of WNV infection were reported from 22 states, including 11 fatal cases from 3 states. In addition, WNV infections were reported in 330 dead birds, 450 mosquito pools, and 147 horses.

For 2003, a total of 7,718 human cases of WNV infection have been reported. The states with the highest number of cases are Colorado (2,170), Nebraska (1,540), and South Dakota (964). Of the 7,588 (98%) cases for which demographic data is available, 4,012 (53%) occurred among males; the median age is 47 years. Detailed up-to-date information is available for 7,588 cases, of which 5,025 cases (66%) were reported as West Nile Fever (a milder disease) and 2170 (29%) as West Nile Meningitis or Encephalitis (a severe disease).

Sources: CDC Website.

- [West Nile Virus Activity—United States, October 23–29, 2003: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#), US Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- [West Nile Virus, 2003 Human Cases as of October 22, 2003, 3am MDT \(Statistics, Surveillance, and Control\)](#). US Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Vector-Borne Diseases.

Canada: To 30 October 2003, 443 cases from WNV infection have been confirmed in 7 provinces, including 10 deaths. Two of the provinces have reported probable imported cases. Of these, 260 correspond to the province of Alberta, 88 to Ontario, 38 to Saskatchewan, and 35 to Manitoba. There are 832 cases still under study, of which 729 are from Saskatchewan and 103 from Manitoba.

No new suspected or confirmed cases have occurred in horses since the last two updates on 23 and 16 October 2003. The total number of suspected or confirmed cases remains at 445. On birds, 11,280 serological tests have been performed, with 1,628 confirmed WNV infections; this implies the appearance of 9 new cases having been

confirmed this week. Regarding mosquito pools infected with WNV, 570 have been identified. The provinces affected are the same as for previous weeks.

In total, these figures—together with the reduction of the number of new human cases and the absence of new equine cases and WNV-positive mosquito pools—indicate that the end of the outbreak is imminent, coincident with falling temperatures.

Source: *West Nile Virus Surveillance Information*: [English](#) | [français](#). Health Canada.

Mexico: Up to 30 October 2003, 505 human serological tests have been carried out in 22 states, with 4 people showing positive results, 3 in Chihuahua and 1 in Sonora (confirmed by RT-PCR testing). Out of 32 states, 20 have detected equine WNV activity, with a total number of 1,805 positive and asymptomatic cases and 1 positive dead horse. In birds, 8 states have performed tests to detect WNV, with a total number of 102 positive cases out of 17,369 tested and 2 dead positive birds.

Source: [Virus del Oeste del Nilo](#) (West Nile Virus). Programa de Acción para la Prevención y Control de las Enfermedades Transmitidas por Vector de México, Secretaría de Salud de México (Action Program for the Prevention and Control of Vector-Borne Diseases in Mexico, Secretary of Health of Mexico) (in Spanish).

Additional Note: Besides the United States, Canada, and Mexico, there has been native circulation of WNV in **El Salvador** (horses, 2003), the **Dominican Republic** and **Jamaica** (birds, 2002–2003), and in **Guadeloupe** (horses and birds, 2002–2003).

Sources

- *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 2003 9 (7): 860–863.
- *Science Now*, March 2003.
- Direction générale de la Santé, Point presse "Dossier d'actualité in sécurité sanitaire", 26 mai 2003.