



Hawaii State Department of Health

Disease Investigation Branch

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Arboviral Infections

What are arboviruses?

Arboviruses are a family of viral diseases that are transmitted to humans by arthropods. 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 arthropod vectors such as mosquitoes, ticks, and certain types of flies that feed on blood. Everyone is susceptible to arboviral infections, but some cause more severe disease in young children or the elderly.

What are the symptoms of arboviral infections?

For some, infection does not cause symptoms. Others will have only a low fever and/or a mild headache. However, some arboviral infections have potential to cause severe disease or even death. Other symptoms of serious disease can include intense headaches with high fever, confusion, tremors, seizures, paralysis, or coma.

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, arboviruses are not transmitted 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 they may breed.

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