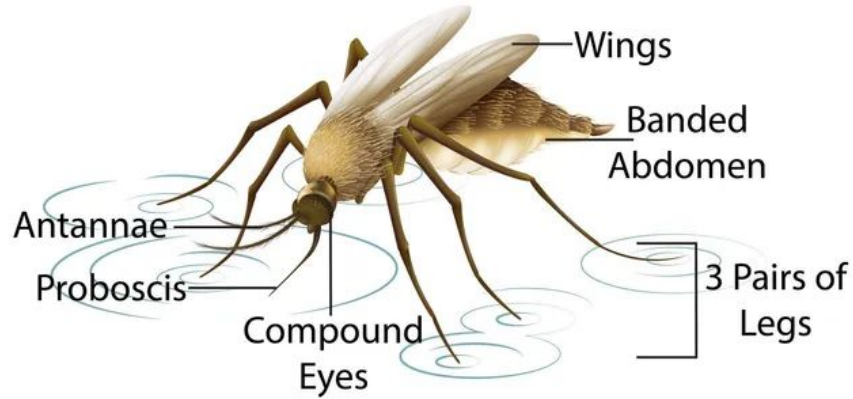


Why are Mosquitoes Dangerous?

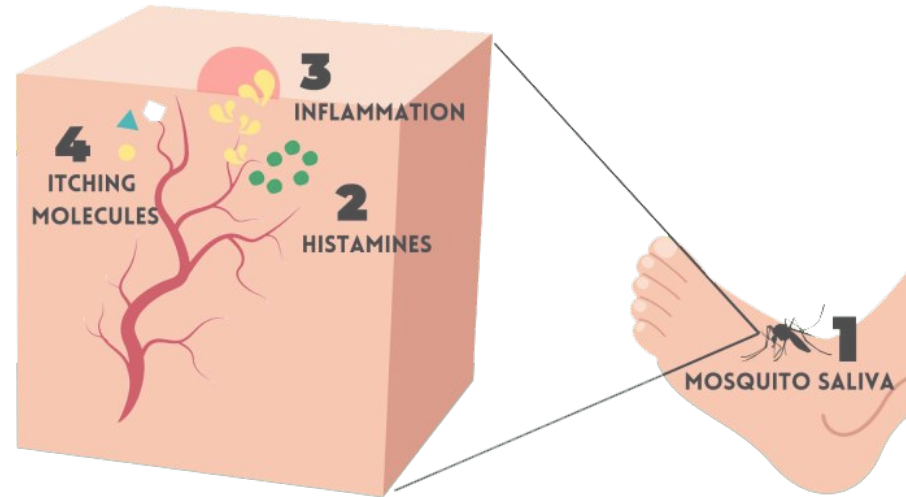
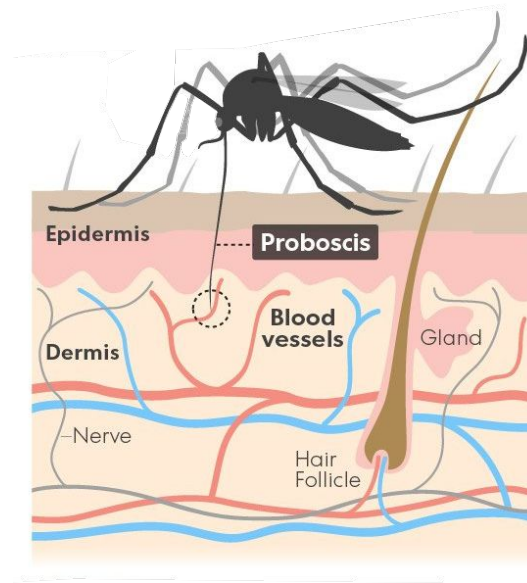


Mosquitoes are a member of the fly family and can be found in almost all areas on the world where water is present. Mosquitoes are notorious for their itchy bites. Only female mosquitoes bite people and animals to get a blood meal to produce eggs. During all other times, mosquitoes feed on plant nectar and juices.



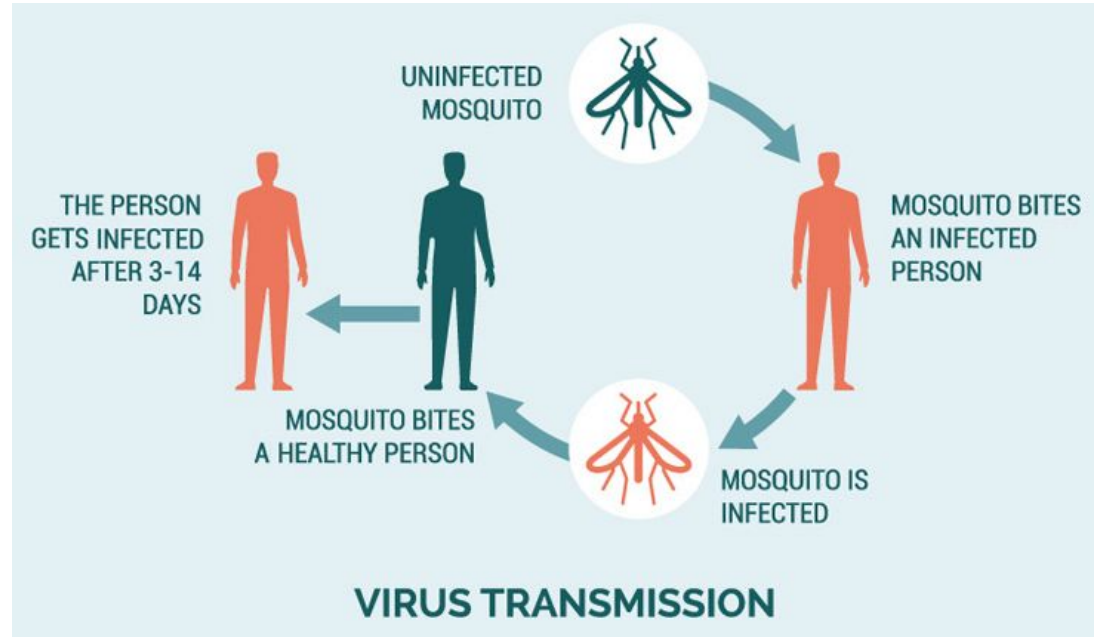
Have you ever been bitten by a mosquito? Where did it happen?

The female mosquito may bite as much as 20 times before she finds a small blood vessel. She then sips blood for about 90 seconds. The **saliva** on the proboscis of a mosquito contains proteins which prevent the blood from clotting. These proteins are left behind and result in the itchy bite.



While the itchy bites of a mosquito are annoying, the real danger comes in possible germs found in the saliva of the mosquito. Mosquitoes can pick up viruses and parasites from one host animal and transport them to another host animal. This makes them a

vector for disease.



Because of the viruses and parasites that they spread, mosquitoes are known as the

deadliest animals

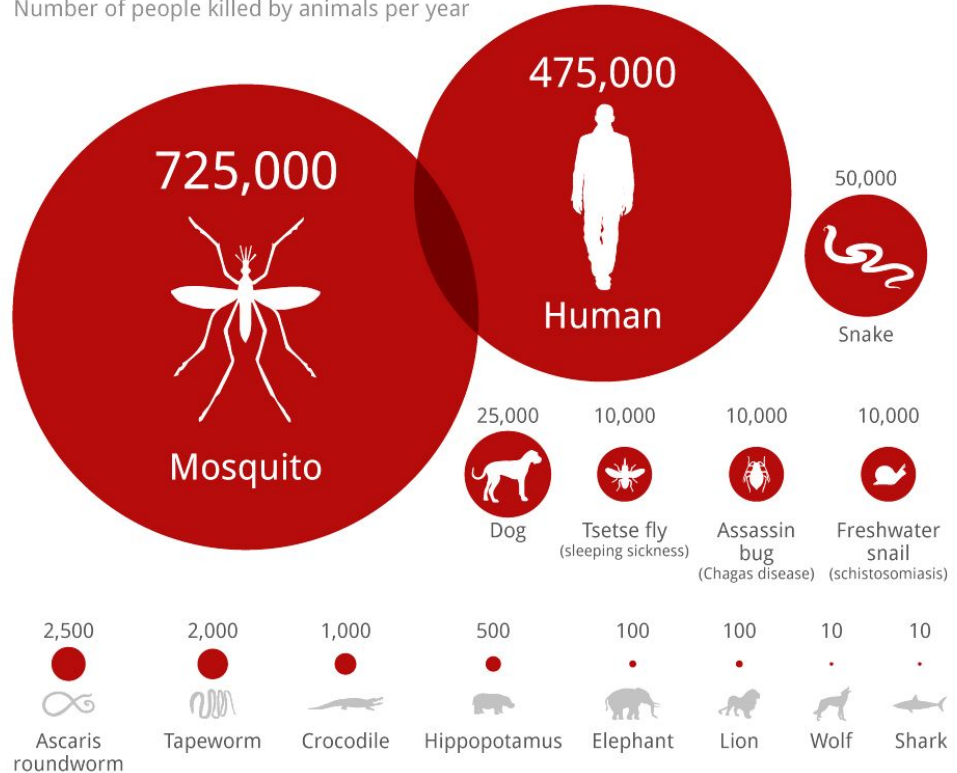
in the world. Mosquitoes are responsible for over 725,000 deaths per year. While many of these diseases are primarily found in Africa and South America, in the United States,

West Nile Virus (WNV)

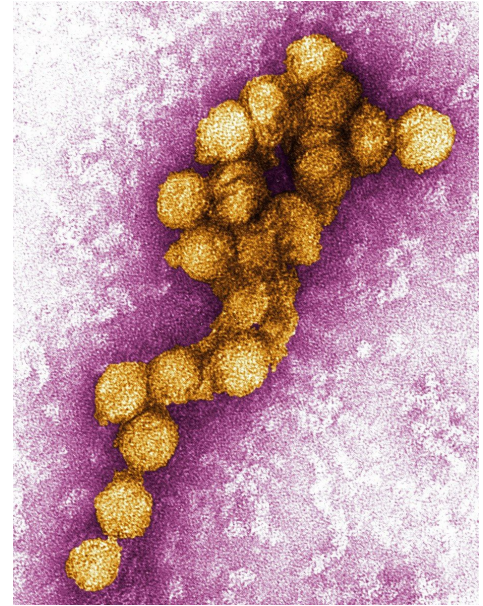
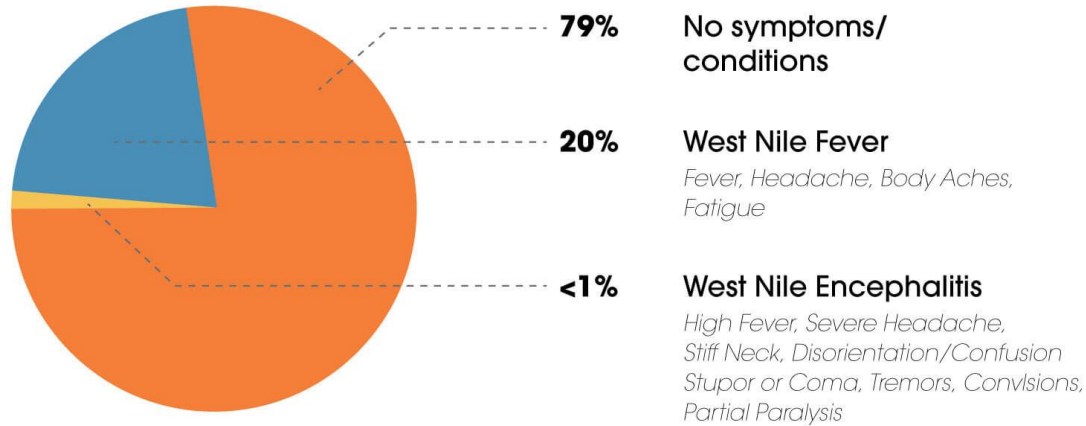
is the most common mosquito transmitted disease.

The World's Deadliest Animals

Number of people killed by animals per year



The chance of getting sick from the WNV is **very small**. In areas where mosquitoes carry the virus, only about 1 out of 500 mosquitoes are infected. Approximately 80% of people who are infected will not show any symptoms. Less than 1% of persons who are infected with the West Nile Virus develop severe illness.



The more that we can prevent interaction between humans and mosquitoes, the more we can reduce the possibility of disease transmission. The death rate of **Malaria** (the deadliest mosquito-borne disease) has declined by 90% between 1900 and 2000.

