

# LA CROSSE ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS

## Mosquito-borne disease information sheet



La Crosse (LAC) virus belongs to the family Bunyaviridae and is known to cause an acute and febrile illness in children. Although it's considered a rare disease, it infects approximately 50-150 people each year in the U.S. Most people experience few to no symptoms, but severe cases can cause brain inflammation and, in rare instances, death. Most severe reported cases occur in patients under the age of 16. LAC was first detected in the country in 1964 and is most commonly found in upper Midwestern and Mid-Atlantic states, with occasional outbreaks reported in Tennessee and Kentucky.

## DISEASE TRANSMISSION

- The principal LAC vector is the eastern tree hole mosquito, *Aedes triseriatus*. Unlike many other mosquito-borne viruses, LAC can also be transmitted through infected mosquito eggs (transovarial transmission).
- LAC infections are most prevalent from late spring through early fall.
- Chipmunks, squirrels, and other small mammals are the primary carrier (reservoir) of LAC, but other animals like domesticated pets and livestock may be infected.
- Water-filled containers, both artificial and natural (like stumps and tree-holes), are important habitats for *Aedes triseriatus*; therefore, spending significant time in the woods may increase your risk for infection.



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## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS IN HUMANS

- Flu-like symptoms may occur 5-15 days after infection, but lack of symptoms is common.
- Severe symptoms include seizures, vision loss, coma, cognitive impairments, and paralysis – and they may persist after recovery.
- There are no treatments or vaccines for LAC, but death is very rare (>1% of cases).



## TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF INFECTION

- Use insect repellent.
- Be aware of peak mosquito biting and feeding hours. Unlike many other mosquito species, *Aedes triseriatus* are daytime feeders.
- Wear clothing to protect yourself.
- Empty standing water from outside containers, especially those containing organic matter.
- Install and repair window screens.



## HOW VDCI CAN HELP

VDCI offers comprehensive services that support government entities and businesses with education and reducing the risk of mosquito-borne disease. Visit [vdc.net](http://vdc.net) for more details on Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM) programs.



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