



West Nile Virus

Health Literacy Curriculum

Objectives:

1. Define West Nile Virus disease

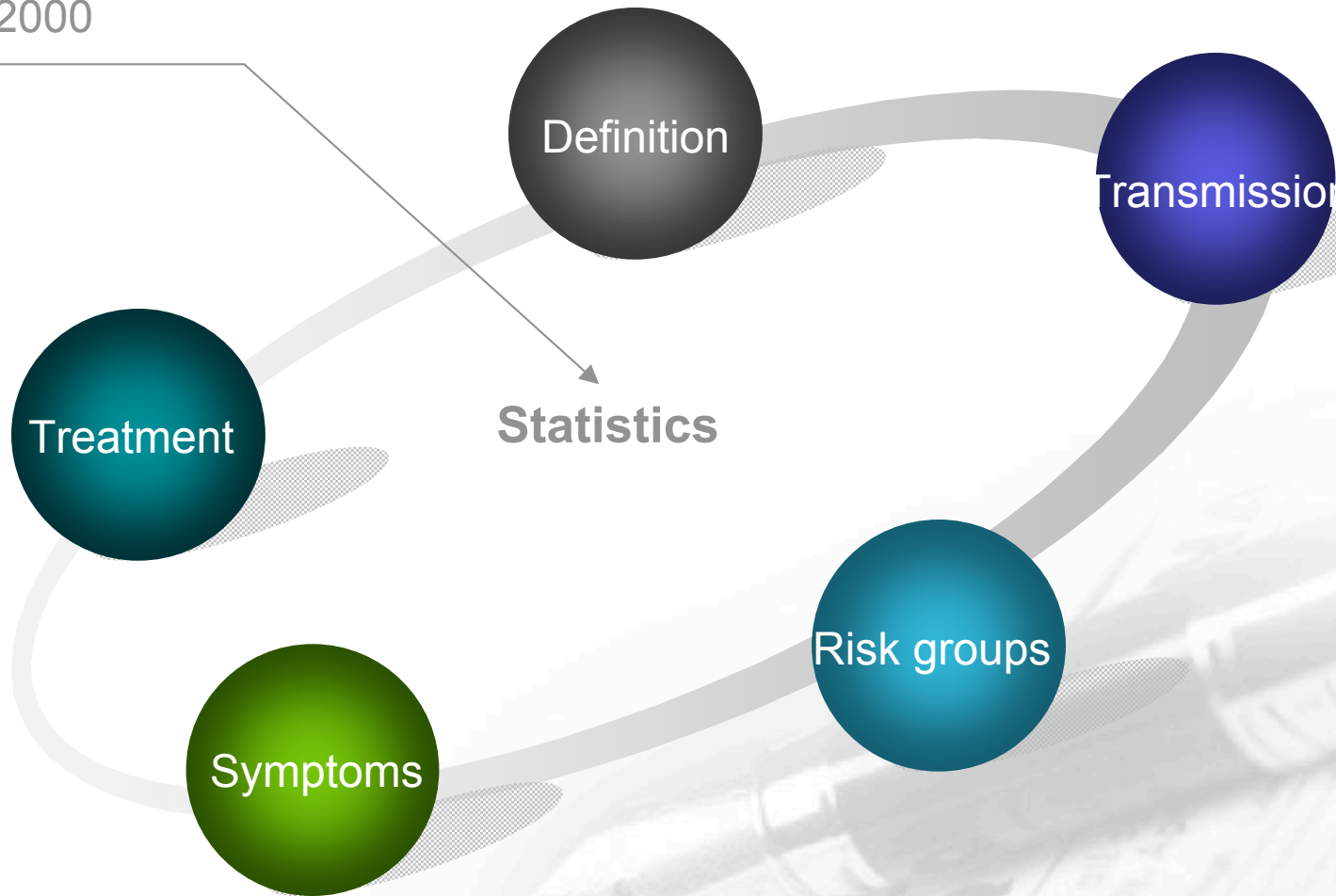
2. Identify who can get WNV

3. Identify who is most at risk

4. Name different symptoms of WNV

West Nile Virus

Since 2000



West Nile Virus

» Definition

- West Nile is an infectious organism that is capable of causing fatal neurological disease in various species including: birds, horses and humans.



West Nile Virus

» Transmission

- Mosquitoes transmit the virus to humans.
- They get the virus when they feed on the blood of an infected bird.
- One to two weeks after feeding on the infected bird, the virus is ready to be transmitted to another organism through the salivary glands of the mosquito.
- With every bite, the mosquito injects saliva and transmits the virus.
- Birds are the only animals capable of circulating enough of the virus in their blood to infect mosquitoes.
- Humans and other animals do not circulate enough of the virus in the blood to infect mosquitoes

West Nile Virus

- **Risk Groups**

- Anyone who is outside is at risk. The more often you are outdoors, the more likely you are to get bitten by an infected mosquito.
- People over 50 years of age are at higher risk to develop serious symptoms of WNV. These people should take special care to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes.
- The risk of contracting the virus through medical procedures is very low.

West Nile Virus

- **Symptoms**
- Approximately 80 percent of people who are infected will not show any symptoms at all.
- **Milder symptoms** include: fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands, or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back.
- **Serious symptoms** include: fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, paralysis, and coma.

West Nile Virus

- There is no specific **treatment** for WNV.
- In cases when a person has milder symptoms such as fever and headache, the symptoms pass on their own.
- In more severe cases, the people usually have to go to the hospital where they can receive support treatments such as intravenous fluids and nursing care.

West Nile Virus

- **Prevention**
- The easiest way to prevent WNV is to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes.
 - Use insect repellent
 - Avoid going outside between dusk and dawn.
 - Have good screens on your windows to keep mosquitoes out of your house
 - Get rid of any standing water from flower pots, buckets or barrels.
 - Change water in your pets water dish and replace the water in bird baths weekly.

West Nile Virus

» Statistics

- There have been 4180 cases of West Nile Virus in the United States since 2000.
- Of the 4180 cases there have been 149 fatalities
- In Texas alone there have been 327 cases and 29 fatalities



Review questions

- What is the West Nile Virus disease?
- Who can get infected with WNV?
- How can you prevent infection with WNV?
- Which are some symptoms associated with WNV infection?

