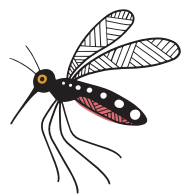


KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT JEV AND STAY SAFE



Help keep our mob from getting really sick by knowing these eight truths about Japanese encephalitis virus, or JEV.

Mozzies aren't just annoying, they can also pass on harmful viruses to humans, like JEV. It can be a nasty illness, so it's important that we know as much as possible about JEV, how to avoid it, its symptoms and what to do if you get it. Here are eight common myths about JEV – and the facts you need to stay safe.





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MYTH: Even if I get JEV, it's not that serious.



THE TRUTH:

To be clear, while most people may not get symptoms, JEV can make you really sick and even be life-threatening. The term encephalitis essentially means the swelling of the brain caused by an infection or an allergic reaction. So, it's something we all want to give a miss if possible.

Some of the symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Fever
- Vomiting

More severe cases can include:

- Neck stiffness
 - Disorientation
 - Tremors
 - Coma
 - Convulsions
 - Paralysis
- (especially in children)

Symptoms usually take 5–15 days to develop after being bitten by a mozzie with JEV. If you, or someone you know, starts to show symptoms of JEV, get medical attention right away because severe cases could require a hospital.

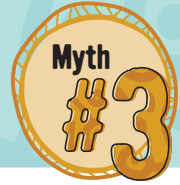
MYTH: I don't live near a piggery or a waterway, so I'm not really at risk.



THE TRUTH:

It's true that if you live near a piggery or waterway like a river or lake, there's a higher chance you'll be exposed to mozzies infected with JEV. But there's still a risk if you live anywhere there are mozzies—which is pretty much everywhere in Australia. For a long time, JEV was only found rarely in the Torres Strait and Cape York areas of the Top End, but now it can be found in many parts of the country. Extra wet periods like the last few years allow more water bodies to form for birds and mosquitos to use.

MYTH: People can get JEV from animals like pigs, birds and even other people.



THE TRUTH:

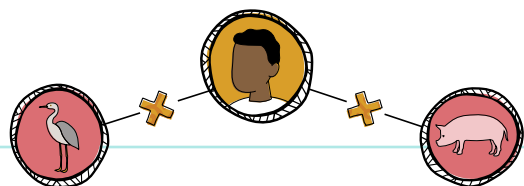
The only way people can get JEV is by getting bitten by a mozzie infected with the virus. Mozzies can get it by biting infected animals with JEV, like domestic or feral pigs, wading birds like herons and egrets, and other kinds of birds. Other animals, like horses, can also get JEV from mozzies and get really sick, but they can't pass it on to people. A person infected with JEV can't pass it on to other people, or other animals—even mozzies!

MYTH: You can get JEV by eating infected pork or bird meat.



THE TRUTH:

This isn't true. The only way people can get JEV is by getting bitten by a mozzie infected with it.



MYTH: JEV is from Japan.



THE TRUTH:

Japanese encephalitis virus gets its name because it was first found in Japan more than 100 years ago, but no one really knows where it started and it's been all over parts of Asia for a long time.



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MYTH: JEV is seasonal.



THE TRUTH:

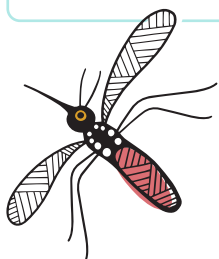
It is true that, as the weather gets colder and drier, it becomes harder to detect. That's because the wading birds that help spread it migrate north, which results in fewer infected mosquitos. Unfortunately, some mozzies stick around and the wet weather and warmer temperatures return. So, between the migrating birds, the piggeries and the ongoing effects of climate change, JEV is here to stay.

MYTH: There's no vaccination for JEV.



THE TRUTH:

There is definitely a vaccine for Japanese encephalitis virus. It is currently available to people at the highest risk of exposure. States and territories are managing the JEV vaccine rollout, so reach out to your local public health unit to find out if JEV vaccination is appropriate for you. More information on JEV vaccines can be found on the Federal Department of Health and Aged Care website [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)



MYTH: There's nothing you can do to avoid JEV.



THE TRUTH:

There are definitely things we can all do to avoid getting JEV. The best and easiest protection is to avoid mosquito bites.

Use these S.W.A.T. FOR SAFETY tips to stay safe:



S is for screens closed and fixed anywhere you sleep, like homes and tents.



W is for wear long, loose-fitting clothes that cover up, especially at dusk or dawn.



A is for apply effective mozzie repellent on exposed skin. It should contain DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.



T is for tip out any dirty water where mozzies can breed.

Now that you know the facts about JEV, help keep our mob safe by looking for symptoms and following the tips to avoid mozzies.

Find out more about Japanese encephalitis virus at [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)

Sources:

QIMR: <https://www.qimrberghofer.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-JEV-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Australian Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/japanese-encephalitis-jev-resources>