

## Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

Mosquito bites are not just itchy irritations anymore. Now they're causing severe illness and, in some cases, death.

Experts believe some mosquitoes carry a strain of the West Nile virus, which causes encephalitis, or swelling of the brain. Encephalitis symptoms include fever and a headache. In the most severe cases, victims fall into a coma.

The mosquitoes become infected by feeding on birds that have the virus. The mosquitoes then transmit, or pass, the virus to humans and animals.

Scientists had never before found the West Nile strain of the virus in the United States, and the search continues to find out how the virus got to this country. It could have been in the blood of a foreign visitor or of a bird that had flown here from another country.

In an effort to kill virus-carrying mosquitoes, areas of the country such as New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey have been sprayed with pesticides. But experts worry that the virus will spread as migrating birds continue to carry the virus around the country.

So far, there is no cure or vaccine for the virus. Experts say that very young children and the elderly are at the greatest risk. What's the best way to protect yourself from mosquitoes? Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and spray yourself with insect repellent.

### Choose the best answer.

1. What is the meaning of the word *severe*?

- A serious                       C heavy  
 B slight                          D loud

2. In this passage, the word *transmit* means—

- A to pass                          C to search  
 B to travel                        D to receive

3. An insect *repellent* is something that—

- A encourages insects to breed    C keeps away insects  
 B causes people to get sick        D spreads disease



## Tetra's Role in Science

Tetra, a rhesus monkey, would never be mistaken for a doctor. But scientists in Beaverton, Oregon, hope he can help them find the cure for human illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.

The one-month-old Tetra is a clone, a living thing artificially created by scientists to have the same genes as another animal. Genes are the parts of living cells that are passed from parents to children. Genes determine how people, animals, and plants look and grow.

Scientists created Tetra by re-creating the way identical twins are born. Although human identical twins are born often, monkeys rarely give birth to identical twins. Scientists divided one embryo, or a living thing at its earliest stage of growth, into two embryos. They implanted each embryo into a different monkey mommy.

Studying identical monkeys—whose genes resemble human genes—could give researchers clues about how to stop human diseases.

### Choose the best answer.

1. What is a *clone*?

- A It determines how living things look and grow.  
 B It causes human diseases such as cancer.  
 C It is passed from parents to children.  
 D It is an artificially created living thing.

2. What does the word *embryo* mean?

- A living cells that are passed from parents to children  
 B an animal that has been artificially created  
 C a human disease  
 D a living thing at its earliest stage of growth

3. In this passage, what does the word *identical* mean?

- A different                        C earliest  
 B living                             D same

