

DISPOSING OF DEAD BIRDS AND SMALL ANIMALS



Birds and animals die of many causes, including infectious diseases. These diseases may be transmitted to humans, but it rarely happens. It is prudent for many reasons to handle and dispose of dead birds and small animals in a safe manner.

The West Nile virus (WNV) dead corvid pick-up program was discontinued in 2006. Dead corvids are no longer required as an early indicator of WNV in Manitoba. Other indicators, such as mosquito surveillance, are used to determine the human health risk of WNV in the province.

If you choose to dispose of a dead bird or animal yourself, follow these standard safety precautions:

- If there is any doubt, check carefully that the bird or animal is dead by carefully observing it for movement or breathing; consider touching the bird or animal with a long stick or tossing a small stone in its direction, before you approach it.
- **Avoid touching the dead bird or animal with your bare hands**, especially if you have open sores or recent injuries; avoid a scratch or skin puncture by any sharp parts of the bird or animal.
- If available, use a shovel or heavy-duty, leak-proof rubber gloves such as those used for household cleaning, to handle any dead birds or animals.

- If a shovel or rubber gloves are not available, you can use leak-proof plastic bags as a glove. Carefully pick up the bird with your hand protected by one or more layers of plastic bags. Then, turn the bag(s) inside-out over the bird or animal so it ends up inside the plastic, with your hand on the outside.
- Handle the bird or animal so the beak or claws do not puncture the bag or gloves.
- Tightly close the plastic bag(s) containing the bird or animal. Tie the ends together or use a twist-tie to seal it shut. Place the bag inside another clean plastic bag (if available) and then close it tightly, too.
- Dispose of dead birds or small animals with your usual household trash.
- At your earliest opportunity, wash your gloved hands and then your bare hands with soap and warm water before any hand contact with other parts of your body (especially your face) or with other people.

For more information, call Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 in Winnipeg or outside Winnipeg toll-free 1-888-315-9257. You can also check our website at www.gov.mb.ca for the most up-to-date information about West Nile virus in Manitoba.