

DENGUE FEVER INFORMATION

About Dengue Fever

What is dengue?

Dengue is a disease caused by any one of four closely related dengue viruses (DENV 1, DENV 2, DENV 3, or DENV 4). The viruses are transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the most important transmitter or vector of dengue viruses. The mosquito becomes infected with dengue virus when it bites a person who has dengue virus in their blood. The person can either have symptoms of dengue fever, or they may have no symptoms. After about one week, the mosquito can then transmit the virus while biting a healthy person. Dengue cannot be spread directly from person to person.

What are the symptoms of the disease?

The principal symptoms of dengue fever are:

- high fever (3-14 days after the bite)
- severe headache,
- severe pain behind the eyes,
- joint pain, muscle and bone pain,
- rash, and mild bleeding (e.g., nose or gums bleed, easy bruising).

Acute symptoms, when present, usually last about 1 week, but weakness malaise and lack of appetite may persist for several weeks.

Generally, younger children and those with their first dengue infection have a milder illness than older children and adults.

If after 3 to 7 days any of the symptoms mentioned below appear go **IMMEDIATELY** to an emergency room or the closest health care provider:

- Severe abdominal pain or persistent vomiting
- Red spots or patches on the skin
- Bleeding from nose or gums
- Vomiting blood
- Black, tarry stools (feces, excrement)
- Drowsiness or irritability
- Pale, cold, or clammy skin
- Difficulty breathing

How dengue fever can be treated?

There is no specific medication for treatment of a dengue infection. Persons who think they have dengue should use analgesics (pain relievers) with acetaminophen and avoid those containing aspirin.

They should also rest, drink plenty of fluids, and consult a physician. If they feel worse (e.g., develop vomiting and severe abdominal pain) in the first 24 hours after the fever declines, they should go immediately to the hospital for evaluation.

How do we know it is dengue fever?

Following tests that may be done to diagnose this condition:

- Antibody titer for dengue virus types
- Complete blood count (CBC)
- Serology studies to look for antibodies to dengue viruses

How long will it take to recover from dengue fever?

The condition normally lasts a week or more. Although uncomfortable, dengue fever is not deadly. People with the condition should fully recover.

Can I get dengue again after once being diagnosed?

A person can be infected with dengue as many as four times. There are four serotypes that are responsible for dengue. Infection with one serotype of DENV provides immunity for that serotype for life.

What can be done to reduce the risk of acquiring dengue?

There is no vaccine for preventing dengue. The best preventive measure for residents living in areas infested with *Ae. aegypti* is to eliminate the places where the mosquito lays her eggs, primarily artificial containers that hold water.

The best way to reduce mosquitoes is to eliminate the places where the mosquito lays her eggs, like artificial containers that hold water in and around the home. Items that collect rainwater or to store water (for example, plastic containers, 55-gallon drums, buckets, or used automobile tires) should be covered or properly discarded. Pet and animal watering containers and vases with fresh flowers should be emptied and cleaned (to remove eggs) at least once a week.

Using air conditioning or window and door screens reduces the risk of mosquitoes coming indoors. Proper application of mosquito repellents containing 20% to 30% DEET as the active ingredient on exposed skin and clothing decreases the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes.

The adult mosquitoes like to bite inside as well as around homes, during the day and at night when the lights are on. To protect yourself, use repellent on your skin while indoors or out. When possible, wear long sleeves and pants for additional protection.

If someone in your house is ill with dengue, take extra precautions to prevent mosquitoes from biting the patient and going on to bite others in the household. Sleep under a mosquito bed net, eliminate mosquitoes you find indoors and wear repellent!

What do we do at M'KIS to prevent dengue?

We want to create as safe environment as possible. To eliminate the source of infection our school:

- conducts weekly mosquito fogging
- minimalizes the retention of water
- places salt in all water retention areas
- created bats boxes to support natural ways of mosquito elimination.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free us at the school Health Office, extension 110.

Inga & Aziela