

DENGUE (BREAKBONE) FEVER

Dengue fever is an *Aedes aegypti* mosquito-transmitted viral disease. Risk is greatest in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, including both rural and modern urban areas, and during either sunny or overcast weather. There has also been a recent small but significant risk of dengue in the continental United States. Unlike malaria mosquitoes, which bite from dusk to dawn, dengue fever mosquitoes are most active during daytime hours.

Determine your risk of being infected with dengue fever:

- Will you be staying near stagnant water (including discarded tires, flowerpots, blocked rain gutters)? Those areas breed dengue-carrying mosquitoes.
- Are you using appropriate personal mosquito repellants (e.g. 25-50% DEET)? If not, you are at greater risk of mosquito bites.
- Have you previously been infected with dengue fever? If so, you are at greater risk of developing a more severe form of dengue, and should seek immediate medical help for any symptoms of dengue.
- Are you an older child or a young adult? You are more commonly affected.

What symptoms might I expect if I get "classic" dengue fever?

- Sudden onset of a high fever
- Bad muscle, joint, or low back pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Body weakness
- Pain around your eyes or severe frontal headache
- Faint rash (50% of those with dengue fever) or a bright red rash (more rare)
- Symptoms are self-limiting and usually last about 6 days

There is a more severe form of Dengue Fever called Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever. What symptoms might I expect from this form?

- Initially, the same symptoms as classic dengue fever (see above)
- Small purplish skin spots (petechiae)
- Bleeding at the slightest injury
- Severe abdominal pain
- Liver damage
- Cardiac changes (symptoms may include shortness of breath, fatigue, swollen ankles, and/or difficulty breathing even when sitting upright)
- Encephalitis (symptoms may include headache, stiff neck, drowsiness, lack of coordination, convulsions, and/or coma)
- *Any traveler with any of the above symptoms should seek medical assistance promptly to assure proper treatment of potentially serious dengue fever symptoms.*

How is Dengue Fever prevented?

- Prevent mosquito bites by proper use of 25-50% DEET on exposed skin and permethrin on outer clothing and bed netting
- Limit daytime exposure to mosquitoes – this includes removing any containers near human living areas that might hold stagnant water

How is Dengue Fever treated?

- Fluids, rest, and acetaminophen (NOT aspirin or NSAIDS like ibuprofen), as well as observation for symptoms of bleeding (a sign of hemorrhagic fever)
- No vaccine expected to be available for at least 5-10 years

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