

What is Dengue?

Dengue fever, commonly known as break bone fever is a flu-like illness caused by the Dengue virus. It is caused when an Aedes mosquito carrying the virus bites a healthy person. This disease is mainly found in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world. According to WHO, an estimated 500,000 people require hospitalization each year. Most cases occur in tropical areas of the world, with the population in the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, Mexico, Africa, parts of Central and South America most susceptible to the disease. As per the data released by the Directorate of the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), there have been 67,000 cases of Dengue fever as of 13th October 2019 in India.

Causes of Dengue:

Dengue is caused due to four viruses, namely - DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and DENV-4. The virus enters a mosquito when it bites an already infected person. And the illness is spread when it bites a healthy person, and the virus spreads through the person's bloodstream.

Once a person recovers, he is immune to the specific virus and not the other three types. The probability of developing severe Dengue fever, also known as Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever, increases if you're infected a second, third or fourth time.

Symptoms of Dengue:

Usually, symptoms of Dengue feel like an uncomplicated fever and not easily identifiable in teens and children. Dengue causes a fever of 104 F degrees along with at least two of these symptoms:

- Headache
- Muscle, bone and joint pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Pain behind the eyes

- Swollen glands
- Rash

There are three types of fever a person is prone to, namely – Mild Dengue Fever, Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever and Dengue Shock Syndrome.

- **Mild Dengue Fever** – Symptoms are seen after a week from the bite and include severe or fatal complications.
- **Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever** – Symptoms are mild but can gradually worsen within a few days.
- **Dengue Shock Syndrome** – This is a severe form of dengue and can even cause death.

Dengue Treatment:

There is no specific treatment of Dengue fever or cure as Dengue is a virus. Timely intervention can help, depending on how severe the disease is. Here is a few basic treatment of Dengue fever:

- **Stay hydrated:** This is crucial as most of our bodily fluids are lost during vomiting and high fever. Continuous intake of fluids will make sure that the body does not easily dehydrate.

Dengue Prevention:

Researchers are still working on finding a specific cure for Dengue fever. Dengue fever treatment involves the use of pain relievers with acetaminophen. Additionally, your doctor will recommend you to drink plenty of fluids and take rest. The best way is prevention. Following are some actions you can take to keep yourself safe from the virus:

- **Disinfect stagnant water:** The Aedes mosquito breeds in clean and stagnant water. Keep water covered at all times and use a proper disinfectant if necessary. Turn over any vessels which can accumulate water and scrub the surfaces thoroughly so as to reduce the chances of developing a breeding ground for the mosquitoes.

- **Lesser skin exposure:** Try wearing long pants and shirts to cover your skin surfaces and reducing the chances of bites. Mosquitoes are highly active early in the morning or evening, so try avoiding venturing out in those times.
- **Mosquito Repellent:** A repellent with at least 10 per cent concentration of diethyltoluamide (DEET). A higher concentration is needed for longer exposures. You can apply the ointment daily to keep mosquitoes away.
- **Personal hygiene:** When you are infected with any virus, you are extra sensitive to other illnesses. Use a hand sanitizer which acts to keep germs at bay. This liquid soap will protect you against many illness-causing germs.

Do's and Don'ts of Dengue



Do's

1. Spray the house with insecticides.
2. Water storage vessels like bottles, cups, drums, buckets, pots, etc. should be cleaned everyday and then filled. Also, they should be covered.
3. Use mosquito nets (normal or sprayed with insecticides) while sleeping.
4. Apply mosquito-repelling cream on skin in daytime, advised by doctor.

Don't's

- 1 Don't let water accumulate anywhere in your house or the surrounding areas.
2. Don't throw things like broken cups, pots, tyres etc., where water gets accumulated during rains, in the open.
3. Don't wear clothes that expose your hands and legs.
4. Don't leave the water tanks kept on terraces and other places open. Fix the lid immediately if broken.