

Traveller Information Sheets



Dengue Fever Information.

What is Dengue Fever?

Dengue fever is a virus that is transmitted via the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquito. These particular mosquitoes can bite many times, which means that many people can be infected. Usually these mosquitoes bite during the daylight hours, hence they are called 'day biters'.

How many strains of Dengue Fever are there?

There are four different strains of dengue fever. Infection with one strain will provide lifelong immunity to that strain only.

What is the severity of Dengue Fever?

Most people can recover from dengue fever; however, in more severe cases the recovery is not so easy. The following are the three types of dengue fever infection:

1. Dengue Fever (DF) – an acute illness with a sudden onset of fever and two of the following; severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands or rash. It is known as a "break bone" fever due to the severity of the muscular pains. The fever can appear on two separate occasions or as waves of fever. Travellers usually recover within a few days.
2. Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) – There is an acute onset of fever with more severe symptoms, severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, rapid breathing, bleeding gums, fatigue, restlessness and blood in vomit. This need to be treated in hospital.
3. Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) – as well as the symptoms above, fluid leaks from the capillaries, which causes the person's blood pressure to drop. Without medical treatment, at this stage, 40% of cases are fatal. With good therapy, the fatality rate is reduced to less than 1%.

Can I be vaccinated against Dengue Fever?

Currently there is no vaccine for dengue fever.

How do I prevent Dengue Fever?

1. The use of an insect repellent containing DEET or Picaridin.
2. Wearing long, light coloured, loose clothing. Dark colours attract mosquitoes.
3. Avoid wearing any strong perfume.
4. If accommodation consists of backpacker or hostel or tent, the use of a mosquito net impregnated with Permethrin is advised.
5. Washing clothes in Permethrin solution prior to travel.
6. Remain in well screened / air conditioned areas.

References

World Health Organisation 2014, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 7th April 2014, <<http://www.who.int/ith/diseases/dengue/en/>>

World Health Organisation 2014, Geneva Switzerland, viewed 15th April, <<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs117/en/>>

Shoreland Inc, n.d. *Dengue*, Milwaukee, WI 53213-0795, viewed 7th April 2014, <<https://www.travax.com/scripts/main/topframeset.asp?DocID=medical>>