

What is Dengue Fever?

Dengue fever is a viral illness spread by the dengue mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*). This mosquito is found in many tropical countries around the world, including parts of Queensland.

Are there different strains/types of Dengue?

Yes, there are 4 types of the dengue virus that cause dengue fever – Dengue Type 1, 2, 3 and 4. People become immune to a particular type of dengue virus once they've had it, but can still get sick from the other types of dengue if exposed.

Is there an increased risk, if you have had Dengue previously?

Yes, catching different types of dengue, even years apart, increases the risk of developing severe dengue. Severe dengue causes bleeding and shock, and can be life threatening. There have been deaths in Queensland from severe dengue.



How does Dengue Fever Start?

Dengue fever outbreaks begin in Queensland when someone is infected with dengue overseas and arrives with the virus in their blood. This is called an imported case. A local dengue mosquito bites this person, becomes infected with the virus, and then passes it on to other people by biting them. These are known as locally acquired cases.

Can the disease be spread from Person to Person?

No

How does the Dengue Fever Spread?

Dengue fever is caused by a virus spread by the dengue mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*). Dengue mosquitoes are not born with the dengue virus. When a dengue mosquito bites someone who is sick with dengue fever, that mosquito is infected and becomes a carrier of the virus. Once the mosquito is a carrier, it can spread the virus to other people by biting them. The mosquitoes carry the virus for life and can infect many people.

How long does it take to get sick?

People get sick 3 to 14 days after being bitten by an infected dengue mosquito. While sick with dengue fever people are able to pass the virus on to other dengue mosquitoes that bite them. These mosquitoes can then infect more people and one dengue case can very quickly become many, which results in an outbreak.



SYMPTOMS >>

What are the Symptoms?

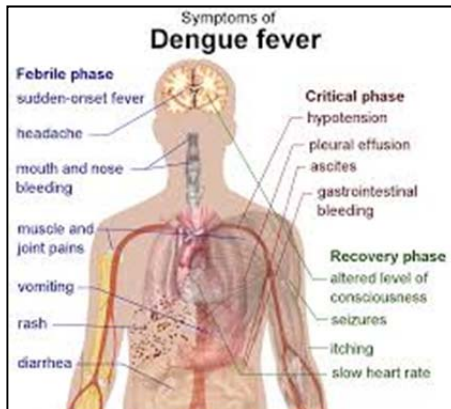
Dengue fever has many symptoms, and people usually experience a combination of symptoms. Common symptoms of dengue fever are:

- sudden fever and extreme tiredness
- intense headache (especially behind the eyes)
- muscle and joint pain
- loss of appetite
- vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain
- a metallic taste in the mouth
- red or macular (small, flat red spots) rash occurs in half of cases
- minor bleeding from nose and gums

Most symptoms last up to a week and in some cases the fever may return for another 2-3 days. Dengue fever symptoms affect everyone differently. They can range from mild, and can even go unnoticed (often in children), to very severe and potentially fatal. Most people will experience a certain amount of discomfort, regardless of their specific symptoms, and usually need to spend a few days resting at home. This is important, not only for recovery but to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Complications include shock (collapsing due to internal fluid loss) and hemorrhage (heavy bleeding), which is usually associated with severe dengue.

For more information:

PH. (07) 4761 5300 | E. mail@charterstowers.qld.gov.au | www.charterstowers.qld.gov.au



What should I do if I have any combination of the symptoms?

The only way to confirm a dengue fever diagnosis is with a blood test. See a doctor immediately if you have any combination of dengue symptoms.

Tell the doctor:

- what symptoms you have
- when the symptoms started
- if you have been overseas within the last 2 weeks
- if anyone else in your household is sick with the same symptoms.

While you are unwell avoid being bitten by mosquitoes so as not to pass the virus on to other dengue mosquitoes by:

- staying in screened accommodation
- applying personal insect repellent particularly during daylight hours

If other people in your household are unwell, tell them to see a doctor immediately.

RISK PREVENTION >>

How can I prevent or reduce the risk of Dengue in the Home?

Dengue mosquitoes only live and breed around your house and yard so the best way to protect yourself and your family from dengue fever is for you to empty water from containers and store undercover, or throw out, anything that can hold water. Dengue mosquitoes only need a small amount of water in a container to lay their eggs. The eggs hatch into 'wigglers' or larvae, and in 7-10 days become adult dengue mosquitoes, capable of spreading dengue fever.

To reduce your risks of getting dengue just remember these three simple steps:

TIP IT, STORE IT, THROW IT

Tip out water from things like pot plant bases, plastic containers, tarpaulins, tin cans or buckets and wipe them out.

Store anything that can hold water undercover or in a dry place, including tyres, gardening equipment, toys, buckets, trailers or boats.

Throw out any rubbish lying around your yard like leaves in gutters, fallen palm fronds and unused containers or tyres.

Mosquito eggs need water to hatch. The adult mosquito lays the eggs on the water surface; the eggs then float to the side and attach to the container. When the water level drops or the container is emptied, the eggs remain on the container. Once they are wet again, they take about 3 days to hatch into 'wigglers' and then become adult mosquitos. For this reason it is important to wipe out containers to remove the eggs.

PLEASE NOTE:

Remember, dengue mosquitoes do not breed in rivers, swamps, creeks, long grass, bush land or mangroves; they breed in containers in our backyard. **Check around your yard every week for dengue mosquito breeding containers**, particularly during the wet season (November to March) when there is more rain to fill the containers that dengue mosquitoes lay their eggs in.

How Can I protect my Family?

- wear a good repellent (containing DEET or Picaridin) - particularly during daylight hours when the dengue mosquito is most active
- ensure window and door screens are in good condition
- use mosquito coils or plug-in mosquito repellent devices
- wear long, loose clothing to help protect yourself from bites.

MORE INFORMATION >>

If you require any further information about Dengue, including current outbreaks please visit: www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/diseases/mosquito-borne/dengue/default.asp

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