

Dengue Fever

Liverpool School of
Tropical Medicine



What is Dengue?

Dengue Fever (Break-bone Fever) is a viral infection transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. There are four distinct “serotypes” of Dengue virus, and immunity against one type does not confer immunity against the others.

The mosquitoes that transmit Dengue are most active during daylight hours biting from dawn till dusk. Their peak biting hours are early morning and in the evening before dusk.

The number of cases of dengue worldwide is increasing dramatically and an increasing number of UK Travellers have been getting the disease. Most cases in the UK are acquired in Asia, the Americas and the Caribbean.

Signs and Symptoms:

The average incubation period for dengue is 4-7 days. In up to 80% of cases there are no symptoms, but when symptoms occur, they include:

- high fever
- headache
- pain behind the eyes
- muscle and joint pain
- nausea and vomiting
- swollen glands
- widespread red rash

1st infection with Dengue: symptoms usually last for about 2-7 days although you may feel tired and slightly unwell for several weeks afterwards. **You should seek medical advice to confirm/diagnose Dengue.**

Though there is no specific treatment for Dengue, it usually involves relieving symptoms whilst the disease runs its course, and most people recover, the following can help: paracetamol to relieve pain and fever – (avoid aspirin or ibuprofen, as these can cause bleeding problems in people with dengue), drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

Dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF)

If Dengue fever is contracted a 2nd time it can be the more serious and life-threatening dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF). When DHF occurs, there is a sudden deterioration in condition between days 2 to 7.

Symptoms include abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, change in temperature from very high temperature to low temperature, very low blood pressure (shock), fluid build-up in the lungs and severe bleeding. This form of dengue is more common in children, adolescents and pregnant and those with repeated infections.

Dengue vaccine (Qdenga) is available to individuals that have had previous dengue infection. A detailed medical history and risk assessment must be undertaken prior to vaccination as not everyone is suitable to receive the vaccine. If you have had Dengue fever and you wish to be vaccinated contact 01517053223 or email tropshop@lstmed.ac.uk

Preventing bites:

- Avoidance of mosquito bites particularly during daylight hours
- Wear loose long-sleeved tops and trousers
- Apply mosquito repellent containing DEET 30-50% to exposed skin - applied over sun cream.
- DEET containing repellent of no more than 50% can be used on small areas of children’s skin but should be avoided in babies under 2 months of age.
- For extra protection consider using a clothing treatment which contains an insecticide called permethrin.

For more information about Dengue see:

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/13/dengue>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dengue/>

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Page 1 of 1