



### DENGUE FEVER - Dr. Delphine Victoria

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**D**engue fever is a mosquito-borne disease that occurs in tropical and subtropical areas of the world. Mild dengue fever causes high fever, rash, and muscle and joint pain. A severe form of dengue fever, also called dengue hemorrhagic fever, can cause severe bleeding, a sudden drop in blood pressure (shock) and death.

Dengue fever is caused by one of four different but related viruses. It is spread by the bite of mosquitoes, most commonly the mosquito **Aedes aegypti**, which is found in tropic and subtropic regions. This includes parts of:

- Indonesian archipelago into northeastern Australia
- South and Central America
- Southeast Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Some parts of the Caribbean

Dengue fever is being seen more often in world travelers.

#### SYMPTOMS

Dengue fever begins with a sudden high fever, often as high as 104 - 105 degrees Fahrenheit, 4 to 7 days after the infection. A flat, red rash may appear over most of the body 2 - 5 days after the fever starts. A second rash, which looks like the measles, appears later in the disease. Infected people may have increased skin sensitivity and are very uncomfortable.

Other symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Headache (especially behind the eyes)

- Joint & Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Swollen lymph nodes or glands
- Vomiting

#### TREATMENT

There is no specific treatment for dengue fever. You will need fluids if there are signs of dehydration. Acetaminophen is used to treat a high fever. Avoid taking aspirin.

Dengue Haemorrhagic fever is a more severe form of the viral illness.

Symptoms include headache, fever, rash, and evidence of hemorrhage in the body. Petechiae (small red or purple splotches or blisters under the skin), bleeding in the nose & gums and black stools are all possible signs of haemorrhage. This form of dengue fever can be life-threatening and can progress to the most severe form of the illness, known as the dengue shock syndrome.

#### PREVENTION & CONTROL

Neither vaccine nor drugs for preventing infection are available. The bite of one infected mosquito can result in infection. The risk of being bitten is highest during the early morning, several hours after day-break, and in the late afternoon before sunset. However, mosquitoes may feed at any time during the day. *Aedes* mosquitoes typically live indoors and are often found in dark, cool

places such as in closets, under beds, behind curtains, and in bathrooms.

At present, the only method to control or prevent the transmission of dengue virus is to combat vector mosquitoes through:

- preventing mosquitoes from accessing egg-laying habitats by environmental management and modification.
- disposing of solid waste properly and removing artificial man-made habitats.
- covering, emptying and cleaning of domestic water storage containers on a weekly basis;
- applying appropriate insecticides to water storage outdoor containers.
- using of personal household protection such as window screens, long-sleeved clothes, insecticide treated materials, coils and vaporizers.
- improving community participation and mobilisation for sustained vector control.
- applying insecticides as space spraying during outbreaks as one of the emergency vector control measures.



*“To lengthen thy Life, lessen thy meals.”*

~ Benjamin Franklin

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## STEPS TO AVOID FLU IN KIDS THIS SEASON

As your kids get older -- and grow out of that maddening I-must-put-everything-in-my-mouth phase -- you can start teaching them habits that will protect them from germs like cold and flu viruses.

### HEALTHY HABIT FOR KIDS: GETTING IN A ROUTINE

When teaching healthy habits, focus on what's important. You probably don't need to lecture toddlers on the germ theory of disease. Concepts like contagion are probably too hard to grasp for little kids.

"You really can't teach a preschooler to stay away from a friend who's coughing," says an expert.

So instead of explaining, the key is to practice and ritualize some good behaviors. If you make them systematic, the odds are much better that you kids will stick with them -- and stay a little healthier as a result.

If you make good habits part of a routine, it all becomes much easier and your kids will do them without thinking.

### HEALTHY HABIT FOR KIDS: HAND WASHING

When it comes to healthy habits for kids, hand washing is the most important one. To make it work, it's got to be built into their daily routines.

Parents should make hand washing a ritual, like brushing their teeth. You don't have to do it so obsessively that their hands get chapped. But you should always have your kids wash their hands:

- When they arrive at day care or preschool
- Before they eat
- After changes or after using the potty or toilet
- After playing
- As soon as they come in the house -- whether it's from school or from playing in the yard

The key is consistency. Get them to do it every time. If you do, your kids might start hand washing automatically. They might even start reminding you if you forget.

It's also important to do hand washing well. Always use warm water and soap and spend 15-20 seconds ideally.

If soap and water aren't available, an alcohol-based gel will work too. Just make sure that your kids

really scrub their hands for about 20 seconds. They're done when the gel has completely evaporated.

Of course, some kids will resist hand washing. What can you do? Here are a few tips.

- Make them do dishes. Lots of toddlers and preschool age kids love playing in the sink. So instead of getting into a struggle about hand washing, just stand them on a chair by the sink, give them the soap and a dish to wash. If they keep at it for a few minutes, they'll probably get their hands pretty clean.
- Choose the right soap. A bar of white soap can seem pretty dull. But if you can find a soap that catches their attention -- with a fruity smell, or maybe a cartoon character on the bottle -- you might have better luck with hand washing. To add to the mystique, you could make the soap especially for your child's use. Keep it on a high shelf and take it down only when she needs it.

### HEALTHY HABIT FOR KIDS: OTHER TIPS

Hand washing is the most important, but there are other healthy habits for kids that can reduce the spread of germs.

**Cough into the arm.** Many of us were told as kids to cover our mouths with our hands when we coughed or sneezed. The problem with that old advice is that it results in a handful of germs -- which are then spread on everything a kid touches.

Experts now recommend that kids -- and adults -- cough and sneeze into the crook of their arms. That way, the germs are less likely to wind up coating every surface in the room.

**Teach by example.** As any parent knows, trying to get a toddler to do something can be maddening. Asking, or demanding, or begging your kid to adopt healthy habits might seem hopeless.

But one good strategy to instill healthy habits in kids is to get your kids to mimic you. Model good behavior. Make a show of hand washing when you get home from work -- and do it for the full 20 seconds. Always cough and sneeze into your own arm. Your kids will probably notice, and over time it could really have the desired effect.



"You really can't teach a preschooler to stay away from a friend who's coughing..."



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