

Dengue

Frequently Asked Questions



What is Dengue?

Dengue is caused by any one of four closely related viruses that are transmitted through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. It is the most common virus spread by mosquitoes worldwide.

What are the symptoms?

Signs and symptoms of dengue usually occur 4–7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Many people with dengue will experience fever and symptoms of:

- Severe headache
- Pain behind eyes
- Skin rash
- Muscle or joint aches
- Nausea/vomiting
- Mild bleeding (e.g. easy bruising)

More severe infections leading to shock, severe bleeding, or organ failure can occur and may be fatal if medical care is not given promptly.

How does it spread?

Dengue is spread to humans by a bite from an infected mosquito. The mosquito becomes infected with dengue virus when it bites a person who has dengue virus in their blood. The mosquito can then transmit the virus to another person when it bites them.

Who is at risk of developing Dengue?

People who live in or travel to areas with local dengue outbreaks are at risk for infection. The mosquitoes responsible for transmitting the virus are primarily found in tropical and subtropical areas. Dengue rarely occurs in the United States although local transmission has occurred in Florida, Texas, and Hawaii.

What should I do if I think I have it?

Individuals who suspect they have dengue are encouraged to seek medical attention and notify their doctor of their recent travel history. Currently, there is no antiviral therapy for dengue. Treatment focuses on managing symptoms. For the first 7 days of illness, stay indoors and avoid mosquito bites to prevent spread to others.

How is it prevented?

When travelling to areas with ongoing outbreaks take prevention measures to avoid mosquito bites, especially during the daytime when *Aedes* mosquitoes are most active.

- Stay in air-conditioned or well-screened locations.
- Use mosquito repellent.
- Wear long-sleeved clothes and pants when weather permits.
- Empty standing water outside the home or hotel where you are staying.

Women who are pregnant, adults over 65 years of age, and people with underlying medical conditions should talk to their doctor before traveling to an outbreak area.

For more information contact your doctor, refer to <http://www.phila.gov/Health/> or contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6740.

