

Dengue Fever

What is dengue fever?

Dengue fever is a virus transmitted to humans through bites from the *Aedes* mosquito, a day-biting mosquito. It cannot be spread from one person to another.

- Dengue fever is common in tropical areas, so take extra precautions if you travel somewhere with this type of climate.
- Texas has the highest number of cases of dengue fever in the United States.
- If left untreated, dengue fever can develop into the fatal dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF).

What are its symptoms?

An individual infected with dengue fever will have a high fever along with at least two of the following symptoms:

- a severe headache,
- pain behind the eyes,
- joint and muscle pain,
- rash, and
- a nose or gum bleed.

Typically, younger children and those experiencing their first dengue infection will have a milder illness than older children and adults.

How do I treat it?

Dengue fever is a virus, so it needs to run its course; there is no specific cure. Antibiotics are ineffective at treating this disease. Once someone becomes infected with it, his or her symptoms are treated. **Aspirin-free** fever reducers (like acetaminophen), pain medications, rest, and fluid for rehydration are typically prescribed.

If you suspect you or someone you know has dengue fever, contact your doctor or health department immediately. The best way to avoid risks associated with dengue fever is to prevent it.

How do I prevent it?

There is no vaccine currently available to prevent dengue fever. Preventing mosquito bites is the primary way to avoid the infection. You can prevent these bites by doing the following:

- Spray mosquito repellent on your skin and clothes.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and socks sprayed with mosquito repellent.
- Avoid being outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

- Take time to look around your home and yard for mosquito-breeding places, especially areas where there is standing water. To avoid standing water around your home:
 - Drain kiddie pools weekly.
 - Change water in flower vases, bird baths, and animal watering pans twice a week.
 - Get rid of old tires, buckets, bottles, and cans, or ensure they are empty of water.
 - Repair any leaky pipes and outside faucets, and move air conditioner drain hoses frequently.