

Dengue Fever Information Sheets.

What is Dengue Fever?

Dengue fever is a virus that is transmitted via the bite of the **Aedes aegypti** and **Aedes albopictus** mosquitos. These particular mosquitos can bite many times, which means that many people can be infected. Usually these mosquitos bite during the daylight hours. (Note that the aedes aegypti mosquito also infects people with yellow fever)

How many strains of dengue fever are there?

There are four different strains of dengue fever. They are known as: Den 1, Den 2, Den 3 and Den 4. Life long immunity is not guaranteed after having dengue fever as the second infection could be from one of the other strains.

What is the severity of dengue fever?

Most people can recover from dengue fever; however, in more severe cases the recovery is not so easy. The following are the three types of dengue fever infection;

1. Dengue fever – an acute illness with a sudden onset of fever and a rash. It is know as a “break bone” fever due to the severity of the muscular pains. The fever can appear on two separate occasions or as waves of fever. Travelers usually recover within a few days.
2. Dengue haemorrhagic fever – Is more common in persons aged 15 years and older. There is an acute onset of fever with more severe symptoms, such as bleeding under the skin, which needs to be treated in hospital.
3. Dengue shock syndrome – where fluid leaks from the capillaries, which causes the persons blood pressure to drop. Without medical treatment, at this stage, 40% of cases are fatal. With good therapy, the fatality rate is reduced to less than 1%.

Can I be vaccinated against dengue fever?

There is no vaccine for dengue fever.

To avoid being bitten by dengue mosquitos we recommend the following:

1. The use of an insect repellent containing DEET, such as RID
2. Avoiding the outdoors between dawn and dusk
3. Wearing long, light coloured, loose clothing, as dark colours attract mosquito's
4. Avoid wearing any strong perfume
5. If accommodation consists of backpacker or hostel or tent, the use of a mosquito net impregnated with permethrin.
6. Washing clothes in permethrin solution prior to travel.
7. Remain in well screened / air conditioned areas.