

Safety Corner

What is Dengue Fever?

One of the many diseases spread by mosquitoes is dengue fever. Dengue fever is not contagious; the only way for a person to become infected is to be bitten by a striped aedine mosquito that carries the dengue virus, and one single mosquito bite is enough to spread the disease.

The aedine mosquitos like to bite people during daytime, especially two hours after sunrise and a few hours before sunset. The incubation period of Dengue Fever is typically three to 14 days. An infected person may experience intense pain in the joints and muscles, which leads to contortions. Other symptoms include high fever for three to five days, severe headache, eye pain, nausea, vomiting and skin rash. In severe cases, the patient may present with bleeding from various places and can die from the disease. Children are particularly at risk of contracting it, although normally would have milder symptoms than adults.

At present, there is no effective vaccine against dengue fever. Effective precautionary measures to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes and avoid mosquito bites include:

- Control mosquito breeding by fogging treatment and applying laticidal oil on water bodies that cannot be removed
- Put all used cans, Styrofoam lunch boxes and bottles into dustbins with cover
- Change water for plants at least once a week, leaving no water underneath flower pots
- Cover tightly all water containers, wells and water storage tanks
- Keep all drains free from obstructions
- Top up all defective ground surfaces to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water
- Wear loose, light-coloured and long-sleeved clothes and long trousers when working out-door
- Use DEET-containing insect repellent over the exposed parts of the body
- Use mosquito screens or nets as needed to keep mosquitoes out
- Design structures and machineries exposing to the elements to avoid holding water that can become potential mosquito breeding ground

If the symptoms mentioned above appear, seek medical advice promptly and inform the doctor of your travel history to facilitate diagnosis.

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The Safety Corner is contributed by Ir Dr Vincent Ho, who can be contacted at vsho@UCLA.edu