



## MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

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### Press Release

#### Ministry Declares Dengue Fever Outbreak for the Central Division

Following our previous advisories on the current rise of Dengue fever cases in the country, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services wishes to inform that the number of Dengue fever in the Central Division have surpassed the threshold for an Outbreak in the division. The significant rise of dengue fever case numbers is expected following periods of heavy rainfall and flooding especially during the months of November to April.

The Central Division has reported a total of **1090** confirmed cases of dengue fever from January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, and the most recent increase in March is above the expected levels for the same period last year. Over the last three weeks, a surge in dengue cases have been observed in Navua subdivision, Suva subdivision, and Rewa subdivision while Tailevu subdivision and Naitasiri subdivision have recently reported increased admissions of Dengue Fever cases at the Korovou hospital and Vunidawa hospitals respectively. The Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWMH) has also reported increased admissions above the expected numbers compared to the same period last year.

Meanwhile, the Western Division has started to report a decline in number of Dengue cases in the division, and the divisional team continues to monitor and support responses actions in the division.

The Ministry is implementing its Dengue Outbreak Response Plan and continues to monitor the outbreak situation at divisional and national levels. We are also committed to delivering critical medicines such as IV fluids and analgesics to support the response actions and patient care at our healthcare facilities across the country.

The Ministry's divisional and subdivisional outbreak response teams who have been trained and upskilled to investigate and respond to disease outbreaks continue to lead in the response actions that include vector control, environmental cleaning, and public awareness and education.

We continue to urge members of the public to learn more about Dengue fever, and take necessary precautions to prevent getting infected, and to present early to their local health facility should you develop symptoms.

Please have a read of the Dengue Fact Sheet below for more information.

## **Dengue Fever Factsheet**

### **What it is?**

Dengue fever is caused by the dengue virus. Humans become infected with the dengue virus when mosquitoes (black-and-white striped mosquito) bite someone with dengue (blood meal) and then transmits the virus when it bites another healthy person.

Dengue fever affects millions of people around the world and most people usually recover from dengue fever after a few days, with some experiencing tiredness for a few weeks after. However, in some cases, dengue fever can be serious and lead to severe bleeding, coma and death.

### **How is it Spread?**

Only infected mosquitoes transmit dengue fever. The mosquito contracts the virus when it bites an infected person. The mosquito is then infective for the rest of its life and can spread the virus every time it bites someone. The mosquito that spreads dengue fever likes to live in urban areas and especially in and around houses and in containers or other receptacles that can hold water such as bottles, empty cans, tyres, drums, uncovered water drums, flower vases, and others.

Severe dengue fever can be deadly. But most people will recover from dengue fever after an illness of 2-7 days. Although you may continue to feel tired for weeks afterwards.

## **What are the Symptoms?**

Dengue Fever causes flu-like symptoms that generally last for 2-7 days. Dengue fever usually occurs after an incubation period of 4-10 days after the bite of the infected mosquito. High Fever (40°C) is usually accompanied by at least two of the following symptoms:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Headache
- Eye pain
- Muscle or joint pains
- Headaches
- Pain behind eyes
- A rash

Other symptoms may include;

- Swollen glands
- Diarrhoea
- Generally feeling unwell (malaise)

## **Severe Dengue Fever**

When developing into severe dengue, the critical phase takes place around 3-7 days after the first sign of illness. A decreasing temperature does **NOT** mean the person is necessarily recovering. Special attention needs to be given to these **warning signs** as it could lead to severe dengue:

- Abdominal pain
- Persistent vomiting
- Vomiting blood

- Rapid breathing
- Fatigue/ restlessness
- Signs of bleeding such as bleeding gums, vomiting blood, black tarry stools (blood in stool), vaginal bleeding, and bruising of the skin.

Failure to seek medical treatment in time if severe dengue signs are present may lead to severe bleeding, severe organ impairment, coma and even death.

### **How is it treated?**

Seek medical attention immediately if you think you may have contracted dengue fever. Early diagnosis and management of symptoms is critical to reduce the risk of complications and avoid further spread of the virus.

Patients should get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids.

Take oral rehydration salts if they are available. Paracetamol such as Panadol can be taken to bring down fever and reduce joint pains.

**DO NOT** take aspirin or ibuprofen or any other pain medicine without checking with a doctor.

These treatments can increase the risk of bleeding because they work to thin the blood.

When the warning signs of severe dengue as listed above are present, it is imperative to **consult a doctor** and seek hospitalisation to manage the disease.

With proper medical care and early recognition, case-fatality rates are very low. However, the overall experience can remain very discomforting and unpleasant for patients.

### **How do I reduce my risk of getting dengue fever?**

The best way to avoid dengue is to avoid mosquito bites. This means to:

- Wear insect repellent when outdoors
- Use mosquito nets when sleeping
- Install mosquito/insect screens on your windows and doors

You should also take the time to destroy mosquito breeding habitats in and around your homes, villages and neighbourhoods by following these steps;

- Clear leaves and other rubbish from roof gutters and from around the house
- Remove old tyres, empty cans, bottles, drums, coconut shells and husks, by covering or burying them to prevent the collection of stagnant water where mosquitoes can breed.
- Remove potential indoor breeding habitats including vases, water tray under fridge, empty bottles and cans, and others.
- Cover water stored in drums and containers securely.
- Cut and clear overgrown grass and shrubs around the compound.

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