



Disease Tool 13

Dengue fever

Transmission

- Mosquito bite
- Mosquitoes that spread dengue fever usually bite during the day, especially in early morning and late afternoon and evening
- During pregnancy, from mother to child
- Organ transplants and blood transfusions from infected donors

Symptoms

- Starts with sudden fever
- Can be accompanied by severe headache, muscle and joint pain, pain behind the eyes, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands and a rash
- In some very severe cases, the disease can cause severe stomach pain, difficulty breathing and bleeding (known as 'dengue haemorrhagic fever'), and even death

Prevention

- Prevention of mosquito bites by placing insect screens on windows and doors and wearing personal protection (apply repellents, wear long sleeved clothes, etc.).
- Community clean up campaigns to remove rubbish and cover water containers.
- Destruction of mosquito breeding sites by removing standing water, fogging, and applying larvicides.
- Routine vaccination.
- Social mobilization and behaviour change communication.

If an epidemic occurs

- Increase community-based surveillance.
- Rapidly detect and refer serious cases to health facilities.
- Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication.
- Promote community clean up campaigns to remove rubbish and cover water containers.
- Support mass vaccination campaigns if vaccination is part of country's dengue control program and encourage social mobilization to support them.
- Promote the prevention of mosquito bites by placing insect screens on windows and doors and wearing personal protection (apply repellents, wear long sleeved clothes, etc.).
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by removing standing water, fogging, and applying larvicides.
- Encourage young children and people who sleep during the day to sleep under a mosquito net (if windows and doors are not screened).

Vulnerable people

- Any person in the community can get dengue fever; but babies and young children are at higher risk of severe dengue fever
- Dengue fever is important for pregnant women because they can pass the disease to their unborn baby

Volunteer actions

See the following action tools for more information on how to take action against dengue fever:



Community-based assessment

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with dengue?
- How many people have fallen sick with dengue? Where?
- How many people are severely ill with dengue haemorrhagic fever?
- How many have died? Where?
- How many people live in the affected community or area? How many children under 5 years of age live in the area?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- Are children under 5 most affected? Or are other age groups, occupations, etc., more affected?
- Do people usually cover their water containers (inside and outside)?
- How many houses have insect screens on the windows and doors?
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs regarding use of repellents, sprays, etc.?
- How do people in the community usually dispose of rubbish and solid waste?
- Have the authorities established a vector control programme?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers.)
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people? Do women continue to breastfeed babies and infants when they are sick?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- Which sources of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about the disease spreading in the community?