



Who

All travellers visiting dengue endemic regions are at risk of acquiring dengue fever.



What

Dengue fever is a virus infection that is transmitted by a *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito. These mosquitoes typically breed in or closely around urban areas and are preferentially but not exclusively daytime feeders. There is transient cross-protection among the four different, closely related virus types which disappears over the months following infection. Future infection with a different subtype could increase the risk of a severe infection.



Where and when

Dengue fever occurs in (sub)tropical areas from latitude 45° North to 35° South, with the highest incidence in Southeast Asia, South America and parts of the Caribbean. Each year, nearly 400 million people are estimated to be infected.

Prevention

Avoid mosquito-breeding areas and places such as stagnant water (e.g. in flower pots or discarded car tires). As these mosquitoes take their blood meals during day-time and twilight, make sure to use mosquito repellents during these hours and wear protective clothing that reduces the amount of exposed skin. Vaccination is currently not approved for use in travelers from non-endemic countries.



Treatment

As yet, there is no specific antiviral therapy available for dengue fever; treatment involves all necessary supportive measures.

Symptoms

The incubation time ranges from 3-14 days. The disease manifests as a sudden onset of high-grade fever (>38.5°C), headache, joint and muscle pain and a skin rash. Gastrointestinal complaints may also occur. The revised WHO classification scheme distinguishes dengue fever with or without warning signs and severe dengue, of which the latter may be accompanied by shock and/or severe bleeding manifestations which may be fatal.



In case of infection

Most people recover completely without residual complaints, although this may take some time. In the event of dengue with warning signs (e.g., like abdominal pain, persisting vomiting, mucosal bleeding, lethargy, specific laboratory abnormalities) or severe dengue, hospital admission is necessary.