



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
WELLNESS AND THE
ENVIRONMENT**

Ministerial Building, Kingstown,
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, September 28, 2020

Contact: Permanent Secretary

Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

DENGUE OUTBREAK – UPDATE 28/09/2020

Some 432 laboratory confirmed cases of dengue fever have now been recorded in St. Vincent and the Grenadines since the outbreak was first noted in June/July. The mosquito borne disease continues to affect all health districts, but most cases have been reported as occurring in persons who live in the Kingstown, Georgetown and Pembroke Health Districts. Persons in the 0-15 year age group account for the majority of cases.

The Surveillance Committee of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment, following extensive investigations, can now confirm that four (4) persons have died from Severe Dengue Fever during this current outbreak. As previously indicated, one adult female and one nine (9) year old male who died were confirmed on laboratory diagnosis to have had Dengue Fever. A four (4) year old male who died before the dengue test could be completed, has now been confirmed to have had Dengue Fever from a sample taken after his death. An elderly male who died on Friday, September 25 at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, has also been confirmed to have had Dengue Fever.

The Hospital Services Programme and the Community Health Services Programme of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment continue to provide emergency care to the many persons who present with symptoms of Dengue Fever. The Accident and Emergency Department of the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital is being supported by the Kingstown District Clinic which has extended their hours of operation to 7pm.

All hospitals in the public health system have reported increased occupancy, and the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital has increased the number of beds to accommodate the increased demand for admitted care. This expansion in bed capacity has been sufficient to date so that the Argyle Isolation Facility has not been used.

Health Care Providers, using a multidisciplinary approach and in collaboration with the PAHO and CARPHA, are constantly updating the care delivered to ensure the best clinical outcomes for all patients with Dengue Fever. The Pharmaceutical Services Programme, working with Consultant Physicians, is currently considering the use of papaya leaf tea and α -interferon to determine their use to safely augment care for patients with moderate and severe Dengue Fever.

The Vector Control Unit of the Environmental Health Department of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment will further ramp up the Integrated Vector Control (IVC) Strategy to reduce the mosquito populations through the deployment of district teams focused on source reduction, including fogging. Health Promotion activities, also part of the IVC Strategy, will continue with the engagement of communities, churches and other non-governmental organizations.

The fight against Dengue Fever is a shared responsibility. The public is therefore urged to continue to work with the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment to reduce the risk of persons being infected with Dengue Fever by reducing their exposure to the mosquito which causes dengue by:

1. Reducing the breeding of the mosquito by discarding improperly stored water or covering properly collected water.
2. Reducing rubbish and overgrown bush.
3. Wearing light colored clothes with long pants and long sleeves.



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4. Using insect repellents and mosquito nets to prevent being mosquito bite. These actions are important to prevent further spread both to those who have not had dengue fever, and also from those with dengue fever.
5. Opening homes to allow increased effectiveness of fogging by the Vector control unit.

Symptoms of Dengue Fever include fever, headache with pain behind the eyes, a rash, abdominal pain, vomiting and bleeding. Home treatments for dengue fever should focus on reducing the fever by using cool not cold baths, acetaminophen (paracetamol) not ibuprofen and maintaining hydration by drinking lots of fluids such as coconut water. Persons with symptoms of Dengue Fever are asked to seek medical care early to avoid the possible complications of delayed care.

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