



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

Ministerial Building, Kingstown,
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 20, 2024

Contact: Permanent Secretary
Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Subject: Increased cases of Dengue Fever

The Epidemiology Unit of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment (MOHWE) has recorded a total of 16 Dengue Fever cases for the period January to June 2024, one more case than the total number of cases reported for 2023. While the number of cases has not exceeded the threshold required to indicate an outbreak, the MOHWE wishes to encourage persons to take all the necessary precautions to protect themselves and those at risk from severe Dengue Fever. Persons at risk of experiencing severe symptoms of Dengue Fever are children, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

Most of the recorded Dengue cases are children and adolescents in the age range of 5 – 19 years old. Cases are seen across all health districts, but predominantly within the Kingstown Health District. There has been one case of severe Dengue fever. However, there have been no reported deaths due to Dengue to date.

Dengue Fever is a mosquito-borne illness that is caused by the bite of an *Aedes aegypti* mosquito which is carrying the virus that causes Dengue. This mosquito can also carry the Zika and Chik V viruses. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is most active during the daytime, so that transmission through the mosquitoes' bites would typically take place where persons are during the daytime hours.

Persons are encouraged to seek care early from their health care provider if they are experiencing:

1. Fever accompanied with nausea
2. Vomiting
3. Skin rash
4. Body aches and pains (eye pain, typically behind the eyes, muscle, joint, or bone pain).
5. Swollen glands
6. Persistent headache.

Persons should also pay attention to the **Warning Signs** of severe dengue fever and seek care immediately. These signs usually begin on the first day or two days after the fever goes away, and may include:

1. Severe stomach pain
2. Persistent vomiting
3. Dizziness and weakness
4. Bleeding from the gums or nose
5. Blood in the urine, stools or vomit
6. Bleeding under the skin, which might look like bruising
7. Difficult or rapid breathing.

Testing for Dengue Fever, Zika and Chikungunya is available in St Vincent and the Grenadines for free at the health facilities.

Treatment of dengue fever:

1. Stay hydrated by drinking clear fluids.
2. Fever control with acetaminophen. **Avoid** NSAIDS such as ibuprofen.
3. Pawpaw leaf tea can be used to manage some of the signs and symptoms of Dengue Fever.
4. Rest.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment reminds that the best protection against Dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases is to reduce the breeding of mosquitoes by keeping your surroundings clean and clear of possible breeding sites. The Environmental Health Department has intensified fogging in areas identified as being associated with these cases.

Tips to Rid Your Community of Mosquito Breeding Sites:

1. Clean gutters and drains to allow water to flow freely.
2. Flush water in the bottom of plant holders twice a week.
3. Remove old tires or drill drainage holes in tires that are being used for gardening or the playground.
4. Store plastic, wading pools inside or turn them upside down when not in use.
5. Turn over plant potholders or remove clay pots and plastic containers.
6. Dispose of all empty beverage containers, plastic wrappers, discarded toys, etc.
7. Check for trapped water in plastic or canvas tarps used to cover boats, pools, etc.
8. Remove pet food and water dishes that are not being used.
9. Flush livestock water troughs twice a week.
10. Don't leave garbage can lids lying upside down. Be sure water does not collect in the bottom of garbage cans.
11. Turn wheelbarrows upside down when stored outside.
12. Check around construction sites to ensure that proper back filling and grading prevent drainage problems.
13. Check ornamental ponds, tree holes and water-holding low areas for mosquito larvae. Call the Environmental Health Department at 1784-457-1729 for guidance and more information regarding further inspection.

The Ministry will continue to monitor the Dengue Fever situation closely locally and regionally and will update the public accordingly.

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