



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

Ministerial Building, Kingstown,
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, September 21, 2020

Contact: Permanent Secretary

Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

DENGUE OUTBREAK

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment wishes to advise the public that the Dengue Fever Outbreak first noted in July 2020 continues with a total of 306 laboratory confirmed cases of Dengue Fever from January 1, 2020 to September 11, 2020. The mosquito borne disease, while affecting all health districts, is affecting the Kingstown, Georgetown and Pembroke Health Districts most, with 65.9 % cases coming from these areas. Especially worrying is that 51.3% of the persons affected are in the age group 0-15 years. The current strain of Dengue virus circulating is the Dengue type 3.

Dengue fever is mostly a mild febrile illness lasting five to seven days, requiring only regular doses of acetaminophen (paracetamol) and oral fluids as treatment. However dengue fever can sometimes result in serious illness with pain behind the eyes, severe vomiting, abnormal bleeding and dizziness. Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever and Acute Renal Failure are complications of dengue fever and can lead to death.

The Surveillance Committee of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment is currently investigating four deaths over the last three weeks in persons who presented with symptoms suggestive of Dengue Fever, and quickly deteriorated, some with features of acute kidney failure. One elderly female was confirmed on laboratory diagnosis to have had Dengue Fever. One young male was negative for dengue fever, Zika and COVID-19. Another young male died before the dengue test could be completed. The fourth person was negative for COVID-19, but some of their other results including dengue, are still outstanding.

The Hospital Services Programme of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment in response to the increased need to admit persons with moderate dengue fever, will utilize all available beds in the public system including some of those at the Argyle Isolation Facility. One section of this facility which is designed for the management of persons with infectious diseases, will be used for patients with suspected dengue fever who require rehydration and observation. Another section will be reserved to accommodate any COVID-19 patients who may present in the future.

The public is reminded of the importance of reducing their exposure to the mosquito which causes dengue by:

1. Reducing the breeding of the mosquito by discarding or covering properly collected water
2. Reducing rubbish and over grown bush
3. Wearing light colored clothes with long pants and sleeves
4. Using insect repellent
5. Opening homes to allow increased effectiveness of fogging by the Vector control unit.

Persons with symptoms of Dengue Fever are asked to seek medical care early on in the course of their illness as rapid worsening can occur.

Increased fogging by the Vector Control Unit continues with a focus on schools and health facilities. De-bushing around schools started before the beginning of the new school term and will continue.

END