

MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ENERGY

Ref. No.

Ministerial Building

In replying the date and

Kingstown

Number above of this letter

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Should be quoted.

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PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, 06th March, 2026

Contact: Permanent Secretary

Subject: Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environmental Health and Energy Urges Public to Take Precautions against Mosquito-Borne Diseases During the Dry Season

The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environmental Health and Energy (MOHWEE) is encouraging residents across St. Vincent and the Grenadines to remain vigilant against mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika during the ongoing dry season.

Dry conditions often lead to increased household water storage practices. When water is stored improperly, it creates ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes, increasing the risk of mosquito-borne illnesses.

Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted by the bite of an infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the same mosquito responsible for spreading Dengue and Zika. This mosquito breeds in clean, stagnant water commonly found around homes and communities.

Typical breeding sites include:

- * Water storage drums and tanks
- * Buckets and basins
- * Flower pots and plant saucers
- * Discarded tires and containers
- * Clogged gutters and drains

Persons infected with either Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika may experience symptoms including but not limited to the following:

- * Sudden onset of fever
- * Severe joint pain
- * Muscle pain
- * Headache
- * Fatigue
- * Rash

While most persons recover fully, joint pain can be severe and in some cases may persist for weeks or months. Persons experiencing symptoms associated with mosquito-borne diseases are encouraged to seek medical attention promptly for proper evaluation and guidance on treatment, even as they start paracetamol (Panadol) for the pain and fever associated with these viral

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infections. Residents are however advised to avoid self-medication with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen, until they have been assessed by a healthcare provider.

To reduce the risk of mosquito breeding and disease transmission, residents are urged to take the following precautionary steps:

- ✓ Cover all water storage containers tightly to prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs.
- ✓ Empty, scrub, and clean containers weekly to remove mosquito eggs.
- ✓ Properly dispose of or store unused containers that can collect water.
- ✓ Clear gutters and drains regularly to prevent water accumulation.
- ✓ Use mosquito repellents and wear long-sleeved clothing, especially during early morning and late afternoon hours when Aedes mosquitoes are most active.
- ✓ Install or repair window and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.

The Ministry emphasizes that vector control is a shared responsibility, and community cooperation is essential in reducing mosquito breeding sites and protecting families from preventable illnesses.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has recorded no confirmed cases of Chikungunya or Zika in recent years, and dengue cases remain within expected levels for 2026. However, the Ministry continues to closely monitor the situation across the region. Recent reports from neighbouring countries, including Saint Lucia, have confirmed new cases of Chikungunya, the first since 2012, highlighting the importance of our continued vigilance.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness, Environmental Health and Energy will continue to strengthen surveillance, vector control measures and public education efforts across all health districts. MOHWEE and urges residents to take proactive steps to safeguard their health during this period.

The Ministry will continue to update the public as necessary.

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