

# What Parents Should Know About Dengue

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## What is Dengue?

Dengue is a virus spread through mosquito bites. The *Aedes* mosquitoes also spread chikungunya and Zika viruses. Dengue is a risk to anyone traveling to a tropical or subtropical region of the world where dengue virus is found.

## What are the Symptoms of Dengue?

Most people infected have mild or no symptoms. About 1 in 4 people infected with dengue will get sick. Mild symptoms of dengue may be confused with other illnesses that cause fever and flu-like illness. Most people will recover after about one week.

Severe illness requires prompt medical attention. Symptoms include: Severe stomach pain or vomiting (at least 3 vomiting episodes within 24 hours); bleeding from the nose or gums; vomiting blood or blood in the stool; drowsiness or irritability; pale, cold, or clammy skin; difficulty breathing.

## How does Dengue Spread?

Dengue is mainly transmitted through the bite of infected *Aedes* mosquitoes, the same mosquitoes that spread chikungunya and Zika viruses.

## Who is at Risk?

Anyone who is living in or traveling to an area, usually a tropical area, where dengue virus is found is at risk for infection.

## How is Dengue Diagnosed?

See your healthcare provider if you or your child develop symptoms (fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes). Your healthcare provider may order blood tests to look for dengue or other similar viral diseases like Zika virus or chikungunya.

## Should a Child with Dengue be Excluded from Head Start or Child Care Programs?

Dengue is spread by mosquitos and does not spread by touching others. As usual, children should remain out of the center if they have a fever or are vomiting.

## Help protect your family from getting dengue

- There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat dengue.
- Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, or trash containers. Check inside and outside your home.
- Use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Use the air conditioner if you can.

## Protect your family from mosquito bites

- Cover up! Wear protective clothing. Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants covering most of the body.

## Use EPA-registered insect repellents

- Follow label instructions, reapply as directed.
- If you are using sunscreen – apply it first then put on the insect repellent.

## How to apply insect repellent on children

- Spray insect repellent on your hands then put it on your child's face.
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used in children less than 3 years old.
- Don't use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months.
- Children <2 months may be protected by covering carrier with mosquito netting.
- Don't put insect repellent onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth, and cut or irritated skin.

## How to Talk to Children about Dengue

- If children have questions, make time to listen and answer their questions.
- Speak in a calm tone of voice. Use reassuring words.
- Keep all explanations easy for your child to understand.

## Where Can I Learn More?

- [Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers on talking with children about infectious disease outbreaks.](#)
- [EPA approved repellents](#)