

What is dengue fever?

Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne disease caused by a virus. The disease is found in most tropical and subtropical areas (including some islands in the Caribbean, Mexico, most countries of South and Central America, the Pacific, Asia, and parts of tropical Africa). Cases originating in the United States are virtually unknown, but occasionally residents from or visitors to countries where dengue fever occurs may arrive in this country with dengue fever.

Who gets dengue fever?

Dengue fever can occur in people of all ages who are exposed to infected mosquitoes. The disease occurs mainly in tropical Asia and the Caribbean, usually during the rainy season in areas with high numbers of infected mosquitoes.

How is dengue fever spread?

Dengue fever is spread by the bite of certain species of infected *Aedes* mosquitoes. It cannot be spread from one person to another.

What are the symptoms of dengue fever?

Dengue fever is characterized by the rapid development of a fever that can last from five to seven days, intense headache, joint and muscle pain and a rash. The rash develops on the feet or legs three to four days after the beginning of the fever. Some cases of dengue show disorders in blood clotting which can result in internal bleeding. This is called the hemorrhagic form. The hemorrhagic form of dengue fever is more severe and is associated with loss of appetite, vomiting, high fever, headache and abdominal pain. Shock and circulatory failure might occur. Untreated hemorrhagic disease results in death in up to 50 percent of cases.

How soon do symptoms occur?

Dengue fever can develop from three to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito, commonly within five to six days.

Does past infection with dengue virus make a person immune?

There are four strains of dengue virus. After disease, specific immunity is produced to the infecting strain of dengue virus; however, infection with the other strains of dengue virus is still possible.

What is the treatment for dengue fever?

There is no specific treatment available. Intravenous fluids and oxygen therapy are often used for patients who experience shock during their illness.

What can be done to prevent the spread of dengue fever?

Since cases of dengue appearing in Ohio are imported, control measures are limited to advising travelers to affected areas to minimize exposure to infected mosquitoes. Use of mosquito netting and repellents are helpful in minimizing exposure.