



What is dengue fever?

Dengue fever is caused by a virus that is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. The disease is not common in the United States, but is found in tropical and subtropical areas such as the Caribbean, Central America, South America and parts of Southeast Asia and Africa.

Who gets dengue fever?

Dengue fever can occur in persons of any age and is more likely to occur in persons who have recently traveled to affected areas. The disease is usually milder in children than adults.

How is dengue fever spread?

Dengue fever is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito (*Aedes aegypti* mosquito). It cannot spread from one person to another.

What are the symptoms of dengue fever?

Dengue fever usually starts suddenly with a high fever, severe headache, joint and muscle pain, loss of appetite and diarrhea. A rash on the feet or legs usually appear 3 to 4 days after the start of the fever.

A more severe form of the illness called, dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) can lead to fever, nausea, vomiting, headache and abdominal pain. This is followed by easy bruising, bleeding of the nose or gums, and possibly internal bleeding. If untreated, this illness can become serious.

How soon do symptoms occur?

Dengue fever may occur 3 to 14 days after a bite from an infected mosquito (usually within 4 to 7 days).

Can a person get dengue fever again?

There are 4 different types of dengue fever virus. A person is only protected against the type of dengue fever virus they have been infected with and will not gain protection from the other types of dengue fever virus. Therefore, a person could get dengue fever 4 times.

What is the treatment for dengue fever?

There is no specific treatment for dengue fever; however, fluid replacement and other supportive therapy are usually needed.

How can I prevent dengue fever?

There is no vaccine for dengue fever. The best way to prevent dengue fever is to limit your exposure to mosquitoes and their breeding areas by using mosquito repellent, mosquito netting, and wearing a long-sleeved shirt and pants when traveling to affected areas. Containers that collect water should be covered or water should be properly discarded at least weekly to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

**For more information, please contact
Boston Public Health Commission
Communicable Disease Control
(617) 534-5611 or www.bphc.org**