

## Travel Guard® Health Advisory

### DENGUE FEVER

Dengue is regarded as one of the fastest-growing mosquito-borne illnesses in the world. Per the World Health Organization, dengue has shown a 30-fold increase globally over the past five decades. Some 50 to 100 million new infections are estimated to occur annually in more than 100 endemic countries. An estimated 500,000 people with severe dengue require hospitalization each year, and about 2.5% of those affected die.

There have been large outbreaks of dengue in the last year and a half. In 2016 there were more than 2.38 million reports of cases in the Americas region, of which Brazil alone contributed slightly less than 1.5 million cases. The Western Pacific Region reported more than 375,000 suspected cases, with 176,411 cases from the Philippines and 100,028 cases from Malaysia. The Solomon Islands declared an outbreak with more than 7,000 cases suspected. In the African Region, Burkina Faso reported a localized outbreak of dengue with 1,061 probable cases.

Since January of 2017, there has been a rise in outbreaks, notably in the Indian subcontinent (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh), Southeast Asia (the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand), southern China and Hong Kong. AIG Travel, a global leader in travel insurance and assistance, closely monitors the outbreak of this disease and continuously strives to update our customers traveling to these endemic countries. AIG Travel advocates seeking medical advice from a healthcare professional if clients experience any signs and symptoms of dengue fever. Please contact our medical department for more information on appropriate medical facilities.

### What is Dengue Fever and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever?

Dengue is a disease caused by any one of four serotypes of dengue viruses (DENV 1, DENV 2, DENV 3, or DENV 4), and is transmitted by the bite of an Aedes mosquito. In the Western Hemisphere, the Aedes aegypti mosquito is the most common transmitter of dengue viruses. The mosquito becomes infected with dengue virus when it bites a person who has dengue virus in his or her blood. Dengue cannot be spread directly from person to person.

A person can have symptoms of dengue fever (DF) or dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF), or they may have no symptoms at all. DHF is a more severe form of dengue infection and can be fatal if unrecognized or untreated in a timely manner. With proper treatment, DHF has a less than 1% chance of mortality.

### Signs and Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of dengue fever are nonspecific and can mimic other viral infections with similar symptoms. AIG Travel recommends that travelers with symptoms suggestive of dengue fever, such as severe flu-like symptoms (including high fever, severe headache, severe pain behind the eyes, joint, muscle and bone pain), seek early medical attention and proper diagnosis so that appropriate medical care can be provided. Other symptoms include body rash and mild bleeding (e.g., nose or gum bleeding, easy bruising, etc.), which may not occur in all cases.

DHF is characterized by a fever that lasts from two to seven days with general signs and symptoms consistent with dengue fever (DF). When the fever starts

to resolve, symptoms including persistent vomiting, severe abdominal pain and difficulty in breathing may develop. Complications of DHF may lead to failure of the circulatory system and shock, which are life-threatening. This is a serious manifestation of the disease and should not be taken lightly. AIG Travel recommends that travelers seek immediate medical attention and inform us as soon as possible if symptoms appear.

Dengue fever may cause low platelet count, which means the person has a higher tendency to bleed easily. This may manifest as easy bruising, nose or gum bleeding, excessive menstruation and other forms of internal bleeding. Sometimes blood product transfusions may be required to correct this problem. Generally, young children and those with their first dengue infection have a milder illness than older children and adults. People who have previously been infected with dengue fever are at risk of developing a more severe illness.

## Management

AIG Travel recommends that travelers who notice symptoms of dengue fever seek immediate consultation with a physician. Symptomatic relief management is usually adequate for mild dengue. There is no specific medication for treatment of a dengue infection. AIG Travel notes that medications such as acetaminophen or analgesics (pain relievers) are commonly used. However, aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid), aspirin-containing drugs and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g., ibuprofen) should be avoided as they may increase bleeding tendencies.

DHF management frequently requires hospitalization. AIG Travel advises that prompt and early diagnosis is important to ensure effective management. Early recognition and treatment of severe dengue (e.g., signs and symptoms consistent with impending blood pressure failure) can reduce the risk of death. No vaccine is available to prevent dengue.

### Sources:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/Dengue/>
- <http://www.who.int/denguecontrol/en/>
- <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs117/en/>
- <http://www.travelvax.com.au/travel-health-alerts>
- [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/07/c\\_136346566.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/07/c_136346566.htm)
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## Preventative Measures

We advise travelers (especially those visiting tropical regions) to follow some simple precautions. Travelers are at greater risk when an outbreak or epidemic is occurring, so always check the latest regional medical news.

- Protect yourself from mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that spread dengue usually come out at dusk and dawn.
- Seek medical treatment early if you develop fever. Contact AIG Travel for any assistance with medical advice or referrals to the nearest appropriate clinic or hospital. If it is an emergency, immediately proceed to the nearest hospital or clinic. If you return from a trip abroad and get sick with a fever, seek medical care right away and inform your doctor about recent travel destinations.
- Use insect repellent and insecticide products to reduce mosquito bites. Always follow the instructions on the label.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks when outdoors.
- Stay in hotels that are well-screened or air-conditioned.

## About AIG Travel and Travel Guard®

AIG Travel has eight strategically located assistance centers worldwide, and all medical cases are monitored and managed from one central online system. Customers are never more than a phone call away from AIG Travel's multi-lingual and multi-cultural 24/7 assistance and medical professionals.

AIG Travel, Inc., a member of American International Group, Inc., is a worldwide leader in travel insurance and global assistance. Travel Guard® is the marketing name for its portfolio of travel insurance and travel-related services, including medical and security services, marketed to both leisure and business travelers around the globe. Services are provided through a network of wholly owned service centers located in Asia, Europe and the Americas. For additional information, please visit our websites at [www.aig.com/travel](http://www.aig.com/travel) and [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com).