

### Stay alert - dengue fever



Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne infectious disease. It is transmitted to humans by the bites of female Aedes mosquitoes which are infected with a dengue virus. In Hong Kong, the majority of cases are imported cases meaning that people contract the disease while they are staying or travelling abroad. It is commonly found in Southeast Asia countries, for example, India, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

### Symptoms

- Sudden onset of high fever
- Severe headache
- Pain behind the eyes



Young children may exhibit a milder non-specific feverish illness with rash.

- Muscle and joint
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and rash



### Incubation period

(the time from the moment of being bitten by infected mosquitoes until symptoms of the disease appear)

- 3 to 14 days, commonly 4 to 7 days

Although dengue fever is mostly self-limiting, anyone returning from travel to a dengue-infected area and then falling sick should seek medical advice immediately.

### Prevention

At present, there is no effective vaccine for dengue, so travellers must rely on preventing mosquito bites to combat infection. The personal protection measures against mosquito bites are as follows:

1. Wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers
2. Rest in air-conditioned or well-screened rooms



3. Use insect repellents containing DEET (for children keep DEET concentration below 20%) on exposed skin
4. Use aerosol insecticide indoor and use bed nets if sleeping areas are not air-conditioned or screened
5. If travelling in endemic rural areas, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin on it as well as to clothes.



Source (Department of Health, Hong Kong)


For more health information, please visit the Centre for Health Protection website ([www.chp.gov.hk](http://www.chp.gov.hk)).

### Health tips on fever management:

Measuring method	Celsius scale (°C)	Fahrenheit scale(°F)
Oral	37.5	99.5
Tympanic	38	100.4
Rectal	38	100.4
Armpit	37.3	99.1



### Management of fever:

1. Extra fluid 
2. Less clothing
3. Medications: Use fever medications only if the fever is in the moderate range (over 38°C or 101.5°F) and if the child is uncomfortable.

4. Sponging: Although helpful, sponging (artificially cooling the skin surface) is usually not necessary to reduce fever. Never sponge your child without first giving a fever medication.



### Person with fever:

1. Refrain from work or school, and minimize social contact.
2. Wear masks, be vigilant to hand hygiene and respiratory manners.
3. Seek medical advice as soon as possible.



(Reference: Infection Control Corner, Department of Health, Hong Kong)