



Brought to you by

Do I have dengue fever?

Q *I've been experiencing a high fever for the past five days with joint and muscle pain, headache, skin rashes, nausea and vomiting. Could this be a case of dengue fever?*

A Yes, it might be a case of dengue fever.

Dengue fever is caused by the dengue virus, which is transmitted to humans via the bite of an infective *Aedes* mosquito.

Symptoms include fever, muscle or joint pain, headache and pain behind the eyes. Rashes may develop a few days later, with or without bleeding from the gums, nose or under the skin in the form of bruises. Recurrent vomiting, abdominal pain and bleeding indicate a severe form of infection.

There are four variations of the virus, so a person can potentially be infected with dengue up to four times.

Repeat dengue infections may be more severe.

When should I see a doctor?

If you live within a dengue cluster and develop symptoms that suggest you may have dengue fever, early medical assessment is recommended.

Blood tests can be done at all polyclinics and some General Practitioner (GP) clinics. Severe dengue cases require hospital admission for close monitoring. If you have any symptoms or signs of severe infection, you should go directly to a hospital.

The elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions are also at higher risk of complications and should seek medical attention early.



If you live within a dengue cluster and develop symptoms resembling that of dengue fever, early medical assessment is recommended.

PHOTO: ISTOCK

How is dengue fever treated?

For mild infections, ensure adequate rest and stay well-hydrated by drinking at least two litres of water a day to keep your urine clear. If you are on fluid restriction for a heart or kidney condition, home management may not be advisable.

Hospital admission is required for those with symptoms of severe dengue or for high-risk groups like the elderly and persons with pre-existing medical conditions.

How can I prevent dengue fever?

● Prevent *Aedes* mosquito breeding

Check your home frequently for areas with stagnant water and remove it immediately.

Follow the 5-step Mozzie Wipeout: turn the pail, tip the vase, flip the flower pot plate, loosen the hardened soil, and clear the roof gutter and place BTI insecticide inside.

● Protect yourself from mosquito bites

Wear long, light-coloured covered clothing, sleep under mosquito nets or in rooms with air-conditioning or wire mesh screens and apply insect repellent.

Are there vaccines available for dengue fever at the moment?

In Singapore, Dengvaxia is approved for individuals aged 12 to 45 years old, provided they were previously infected with dengue. It is not recommended for those who have never had dengue before.

Do consult your doctor to find out if you are suitable for the vaccine.

Dr Oh Jen Jen



Head and consultant, 24hr Clinic and Emergency Services, Mount Alvernia Hospital