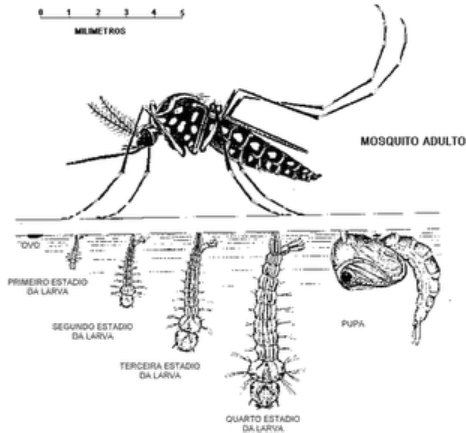




07 August 2015

HEALTH ADVISORY: Dengue Fever



What is Dengue Fever?

Dengue fever is caused by a virus called a flavivirus, which is transmitted by infected female *Aedes* mosquitoes. The incidence is more frequent during rainy season. It is estimated that there are over 100 million cases of dengue worldwide each year.

How does a person get Dengue Fever?

The virus is **contracted** from the bite of a striped *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that has previously bitten an infected person. The mosquito flourishes during rainy seasons but can breed in water-filled flower pots, plastic bags, and cans year-round. One mosquito bite can cause the disease.

What are the symptoms of Dengue Fever?

1. Sudden onset of high fever which may last 2 to 7 days
2. Joint and muscles pain and pain behind the eyes
3. Weakness
4. Skin rashes – maculopapular rash or red tiny spots on the skin called **petechiae**
5. Nose or gum bleeding when fever starts to subside
6. Enlargement of the liver
7. Vomiting of coffee-colored matter
8. Dark-colored stools

Is Dengue Fever Serious?

Most patients recover fully from a Dengue Fever infection (Dengue without Warning Signs). Dengue with Warning Signs and Severe Dengue is a more severe form of dengue infection. It can be fatal if unrecognized and not properly treated in a timely manner. It is caused by infection with the same viruses that cause dengue fever. With good medical management, there is decreased mortality due to Dengue infection.

Is Dengue Fever Contagious?

It is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. **Dengue fever** is not contagious and does not spread directly from person to person.

Can Dengue Fever Be Treated?

There is no specific medication for treatment of a dengue infection. Persons who think they have dengue should use analgesics (pain relievers) with acetaminophen and avoid

those containing aspirin. They should also rest, drink plenty of fluids, and consult a physician.

Treatment depends on the symptoms, varying from oral rehydration therapy at home with close follow-up, to hospital admission with administration of intravenous fluids and/or blood transfusion. A decision for hospital admission is typically based on the presence of the "warning signs" like mucosal bleeding, continuous high fever, liver enlargement, lethargy, low platelet count/high hematocrit (CBC) and ongoing vomiting.

How do we prevent Dengue Fever?

There is no vaccine for preventing dengue. The best preventive measure for residents living in areas infested with *Ae. aegypti* is to eliminate the places where the mosquito lays her eggs, primarily artificial containers that hold water. This can include the following:

1. Remove all possible breeding places of mosquitoes inside and outside of houses such as tin cans, rubber tires, bottles or drain accumulated water from trees and plants.
2. Cover water storage containers to prevent breeding of mosquitoes.
3. Clean house gutters to prevent stagnant of rain water.
4. Isolate patients suffering from Dengue H-Fever for at least 5 days.
5. Report to the nearest health center any suspected case of Dengue H-Fever in the neighborhood.
6. Mosquito nets, electric mosquito repellent, lotion repellants and protective clothing can also be used to prevent mosquito bites.

What should we do if our child is diagnosed with Dengue Fever?

Please inform your child's teacher or supervisor so that we can institute precautions to prevent the spread of infection. Once your child has recovered, please obtain a clearance from your pediatrician that he can go back to school. Your child should go to the infirmary first to obtain a clearance slip before going back to his classroom.