

Warden Message on Dengue Fever

U.S. Embassy Brasilia, Brazil



This Warden Message is to alert American Citizens living or traveling in Brazil to the increase of Dengue Fever cases in the State of Rio de Janeiro.

According to the State Secretariat of Health in Rio de Janeiro there have been 28,233 reported cases of Dengue Fever in 2008 which have resulted in 54 confirmed deaths and an additional 60 are suspected. These numbers would rival the last significant outbreak in 2002 when 288,245 cases of Dengue were reported which resulted in 91 deaths.

Dengue Fever is caused by a virus, which is transmitted by a mosquito (AEDES AEGYPTI). This mosquito is dark, with white stripes on its back and legs, and smaller than a common mosquito. These mosquitoes breed in *clean*, stagnant water. The mosquito is considered a "day" mosquito. It bites during the day and likes warm, humid places.

Signs and Symptoms of Dengue Fever

After the infecting bite, dengue symptoms develop within 3 to 14 days (on average, 4 to 7 days). Victims typically experience a sudden high fever, headache, generalized weakness, and intense muscle, joint, and low back pain (hence the term, "break bone fever"). A subtle rash appears in up to half the people affected, although some have a bright red rash with scattered clear spots. Treatment is purely symptomatic. Dengue is usually self-limited, with an average duration of 6 days. Most persons with dengue do not need to be hospitalized, but those with persistent fever should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Hemorrhagic Dengue Fever (DHF) and dengue shock syndrome (DSS): are rare but severe forms of dengue that may occur in people who previously have been infected with one strain of dengue virus and are later infected by a different strain (there are 4 strains). DHF and DSS begin like classic dengue but progress to abdominal pain and vomiting. The most severe cases, if left untreated, can progress to bleeding at sites of minimal trauma, circulatory failure, shock, and death. DHF and DSS ordinarily affect only people who live in endemic areas, but there have been rare cases reported in travelers. Because of this, travelers who previously have had an episode of dengue fever and who will be re-entering a dengue-endemic area should be aware of the increased possibility of acquiring these severe forms of dengue and should seek medical attention as soon as symptoms appear. Travelers with persistent fever should be seen by a healthcare professional. Severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, an abrupt change from fever to hypothermia with profuse sweating, extreme exhaustion, lethargy, or mental status changes signal the development of shock and require immediate intensive care level medical attention.

How can you prevent the disease?

There is no vaccine for Dengue. Prevention is based upon taking careful measures to reduce the possibility of mosquito bites. Travelers are strongly encouraged to wear light clothing which completely covers arms and legs, and to apply an effective insect repellent, such as those containing DEET, to exposed areas of skin. The control of Dengue epidemics is based upon reduction of the mosquito population. Dengue may be more likely to occur in urban setting due to drainage issues. Eliminating standing water in your home and environment including flower pots, tires, puddles, non-chlorinated pools, etc., and screening windows, and wearing insect repellent are strongly recommended.

For further information on Dengue Fever, see the Centers for Disease Control's website at: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_dengue.htm

In case of an emergency, please contact the Consular Section of the Embassy in Brasilia at Avenida das Nações, Quadra 801, Lote 3, telephone 61-3312-7000, after-hours telephone 61-3312-7400. For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov/where> the current Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements can be found. American citizens traveling or residing overseas are encouraged to register with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate on the State Department's travel registration website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>.