

A Guide for Patients and Families

Instruction for Dengue or Suspected Patients



What is Dengue Fever?



Dengue fever is a disease caused by the dengue virus which is transmitted to humans by infected Aedes mosquitoes.

Dengue fever usually lasts between 2 to 7 days. Most people recover from dengue infection without requiring hospital admission.

Signs and Symptoms

Dengue Symptoms



- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Headache with pain behind the eyes
- ◆ Muscle and joint aches
- ◆ Rash
- ◆ Mild bleeding tendency (e.g. bleeding from nose or gums, heavy menses)
- ◆ Easy bruising
- ◆ Nausea and vomiting

The risk of death from dengue is very low, about 1 in 500, to 1 in 1000.

However, dengue can cause low blood pressure and in rare cases may progress to severe dengue (i.e. dengue hemorrhagic fever or dengue shock syndrome).

Symptoms of Serious Complications may include:



- ◆ Major bleeding
- ◆ Low blood pressure or shock due to leaking blood vessels or bleeding
- ◆ Inflammation of other organs such as the heart or brain (rare)

Warning Signs of Dengue Fever



If you develop any of these signs, please inform Doctor or nurse immediately:

- ◆ Severe abdominal pain
- ◆ Persistent vomiting
- ◆ Vomiting blood
- ◆ Black and tarry stools
- ◆ Bleeding from nose or gums
- ◆ Drowsiness or irritability
- ◆ Pale, cold, or clammy (i.e. sweaty) skin
- ◆ Difficulty breathing

Investigation, Test and Procedures



There will be regular clinical assessments and blood tests to determine which stage of dengue you are at, and you may undergo some following tests:

- ◆ Full blood count to assess hematocrit (blood concentration), platelet count and white cell count.
- ◆ Dengue diagnostic tests to confirm the diagnosis of dengue.
- ◆ Kidney and liver tests to check for dehydration, kidney, and liver function.
- ◆ Miscellaneous tests based on your condition; other tests may be conducted.

Diagnosis and Treatment

There are no antibiotics or anti-viral medications to treat dengue fever.

Treatment mainly includes rest and close follow up with doctor to monitor your condition.

The main components to managing dengue fever are:

FLUID AND ELECTROLYTE REPLACEMENT



- ◆ Drink plenty of fluids (e.g. water, isotonic drinks, fruit juices and soup) to maintain hydration.
- ◆ Fluids may be given intravenously (if you are admitted) if you are unable to drink due to nausea and vomiting.
- ◆ Some patients may also need to have their electrolytes (if you are admitted) replaced.

SYMPTOM RELIEF AND FEVER CONTROL



- ◆ Painkillers (e.g. paracetamol) to relieve pain and control fever.
- ◆ Apply cold compress or tepid sponging to control temperature if antipyretic agents are contraindicated.
- ◆ Medications may also be prescribed for nausea, vomiting and itch. Rash will usually resolve over 2 to 3 weeks.
- ◆ **AVOID** aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen, Diclofenac, Naproxen or Mefenamic Acid as they may cause gastric ulcers and subsequent bleeding and worsen platelet function. If in doubt, please consult your doctor.

BLEEDING PREVENTION AND CONTROL



- ◆ Rest in bed, reduce risk of falls and injuries to prevent unnecessary bleeding.
- ◆ Avoid intramuscular injections.
- ◆ If you develop bleeding, bruises or swelling, please seek medical advice immediately.

Common Questions

1. What if I still have symptoms of dengue fever after discharge?

During appointment, doctor and nurses will perform clinical assessment, blood tests, monitor your condition and symptoms.

2. What if I am recovering from dengue fever after discharge?

Full blood count will be performed to confirm your platelet count and other blood parameters are back to normal. Some patients may require repeated liver tests which can be done at the polyclinic or GP clinic.

3. Can I be infected again?

Yes, there are 4 known serotypes of dengue. Infection with one serotype will provide protection against only that particular serotype.

Future infection by other serotypes is possible and second infection may cause more severe reaction.

4. Can I spread dengue to others?

Dengue is transmitted by infected mosquito bites.

Dengue is **NOT** transmitted directly from one person to another.

Persons in the same area may come down with dengue fever if bitten by an infected mosquito.

Prevention of Dengue Fever



GET RID OF MOSQUITO BREEDING PLACES (MOST EFFECTIVE PREVENTION METHOD)

- ◆ Aedes mosquitoes can breed in our house. Items that collect or are used to store water (e.g. flower vase, buckets) must be covered or drained.



REDUCE THE RISKS OF MOSQUITO BITES

- ◆ Use air conditioning and windows/doors with mosquito screens.
- ◆ Apply mosquito repellents containing 20% to 30% DEET (Diethyltoluamide). DEET helps to deter and repel mosquitoes.