

Dengue fever key messages:

- The Ministry of Health is urging travellers to the Pacific to avoid mosquito bites following the recent dengue fever death of a 12-year-old Auckland girl who was on holiday in Tonga.
- There are outbreaks of dengue fever in the Pacific at the moment. An increased number of dengue cases have been recorded mainly in the Auckland region among travellers returning from the Pacific.
- Most of the cases reported from 1 November last year are from people returning from Samoa. Some cases have also been recorded in travellers returning from Fiji and Tonga, where there are currently increased numbers of dengue fever.
- Dengue fever is a viral disease spread by the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito. Dengue fever cannot be spread from person-to-person.
- Dengue fever symptoms can last from two to seven days and usually include:
 - a sudden fever
 - an intense headache (especially behind the eyes)
 - muscle and joint pain
 - feeling very tired
 - nausea/vomiting
 - a skin rash.

If you get these symptoms while you travel or if you have recently travelled, you should see a doctor, drink plenty of fluids and use paracetamol against fever and pain.

Do not use aspirin and ibuprofen as they can increase the risk of bleeding from dengue infection.

- Two to five days after dengue fever symptoms have begun, a small number of people (less than five percent of all cases) may get severe dengue, with their health rapidly getting worse despite a decrease in the fever. Seek urgent hospital care because the disease is life-threatening. **Warning signs** of severe dengue include:
 - severe abdominal pain
 - persistent vomiting
 - bleeding gums
 - vomiting blood
 - rapid breathing
 - fatigue/restlessness
- **The best protection against dengue fever is to avoid mosquito bites.**
So, indoors:
 - Stay in places with screens on windows and doors. Turn on the air conditioning if you have it as cool air keeps mosquitoes away.
 - Use insect sprays indoors when mosquitoes are around.
 - Use mosquito coils.Outdoors
 - Use insect repellent, preferably containing diethyltoluamide (DEET). High concentrations of DEET protect better, but concentrations over 35% are not recommended if there is a choice of products available. This is because in rare cases they can cause poisoning. Other products containing 20-25% picaridin and those with about 30% lemon eucalyptus oil can also be used. Repellents should not be applied to wounds, irritated skin, eyes or mouth.
 - If you use both sunscreen and insect repellent, apply the sunscreen first and then the repellent.

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- Wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants and hats. Clothing can be treated with repellent.
- Use screens on tents.
- Click [here](#) for advice about what to do if you become sick or injured while overseas.
- Click [here](#) for more Ministry of Health advice on avoiding mosquito bites while travelling.
- Click [here](#) for an Auckland Regional Public Health Service flyer, which is aimed at people travelling to the Pacific, and gives advice on how to avoid diseases spread by mosquitoes.

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