

# DENGUE FEVER



## **What is Dengue Fever?**

Dengue fever is a disease that is spread through mosquitoes. It is a virus and is categorized by four viral types (DENV1, DENV2, DENV3, or DENV4). Dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) is a more severe form of dengue fever and can be fatal if unrecognized. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the primary vector or transmitter of dengue fever, although in Hawaii, dengue has been transmitted by *Aedes albopictus*. It is estimated that over 100 million cases of dengue are diagnosed worldwide every year. There is no vaccine or specific drug to treat dengue fever; however, infected individuals should be under the care of a doctor who would provide pain medications, fluids and rest.

## **How is it spread?**

Dengue fever is spread through the bite of an *Aedes* mosquito that is infected with the virus. Dengue fever cannot be spread from person to person, but it can be spread from a mosquito that bites an infected person and then bites a healthy person.

## **What are the signs and symptoms?**

The most common symptoms are: severe headache, severe eye pain (behind the eyes), severe joint, muscle and/or bone pain, vomiting, black stools, drowsiness or irritability, rash, mild bleeding of the nose or gums, petechial rash, shortness of breath and easy bruising.

## **What is the incubation period and how long is it communicable?**

Dengue fever is not communicable person to person, but the mosquito can incubate the virus for approximately 1 week and then transmit it to a different person.

## **How can I prevent this disease?**

Avoid mosquito bites by following the 5 Ds: avoid being outside at Dusk and Dawn, wear Deet and Dress with long pants and long sleeves if you are outside during peak times, and drain all standing water (potted plants, tires, un-chlorinated swimming pools, etc.).

## **What should I do about it?**

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians. This is an immediately reportable disease and should be reported to Santa Rosa County Health Department.

For more information, please contact the Santa Rosa County Health Department, Epidemiology program at (850) 983-5200 x105 or x140.