



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
WELLNESS AND THE
ENVIRONMENT**

**Ministerial Building, Kingstown,
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Permanent Secretary
Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Higher than Usual Dengue Cases

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment has noted an increase in the incidence of dengue fever cases in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) in the months of June and July 2020 (as compared to the same period in previous years). This was picked up by routine surveillance activities which revealed an overall total of 23 cases of dengue so far for the year. Over the last 7 years, the annual average number of dengue fever cases has been 15. In 2010 and again in 2012 there were outbreaks of Dengue Fever when 218 and 248 cases were recorded respectively.

Dengue Fever is endemic in St. Vincent and the Grenadines which means that it is normal for there to be some persons in-country with this viral infection that is transmitted through the bite of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito (most probable to be the case during the rainy season). There have been recent surges in the number of dengue cases in many Caribbean countries over the last 12 months, including Jamaica and Antigua and Barbuda.

Common symptoms of dengue fever include: severe headache, joint pains, nausea, vomiting, skin rashes, fever and loss of appetite. Dengue Fever is typically a self-limiting infection and though there is no specific cure, treatment includes fever and pain management and staying well hydrated by drinking lots of liquids as tolerated. Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAIDS) for pain and fever, such as ibuprofen and diclofenac, should not be used. Acetaminophen (Paracetamol and Tylenol) should be used instead. The most serious form of Dengue Fever is dengue haemorrhagic fever which can be fatal.

The Health Ministry, Wellness and the Environment is urging the public to contact their healthcare providers if they experience any symptoms of Dengue Fever. Early medical care is important to reduce the likelihood of developing serious complications of Dengue fever.

Reducing the population of mosquitoes carrying the dengue virus is good way to reduce the spread of Dengue Fever. The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment will therefore continue to do its part to reduce the number of dengue cases by educating the public, carrying out targeted fogging with insecticides and conducting property inspections to identify and eradicate mosquito breeding sites.

The reduction of mosquito breeding in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is however a shared responsibility. Therefore, home and property owners are urged to also take actions to control the breeding of mosquitoes indoors and outdoors, and therefore reduce their risk of contracting Dengue Fever.

The public is encouraged to:

- Use screens on windows and doors
- Stop mosquitoes from laying eggs in or near water by covering, emptying and cleaning domestic water storage containers regularly. These include items such as old tyres, planters, flowerpots and trash cans.
- Use mosquito repellent
- Wear clothes that minimise skin exposure to mosquitoes such as long sleeves shirts and long pants

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