



**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

DENGUE OUTBREAK – UPDATE 21/11/2020

The Surveillance Committee of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment has recorded sixteen hundred and seventeen (1617) laboratory confirmed cases of dengue fever as of November 14, 2020, epidemiological week 46. There has been a consistent decrease in the number of laboratory confirmed cases of dengue fever since epidemiological week 41, the week ending October 10, when 194 cases were recorded. There has also been a decrease in clinically diagnosed cases of dengue fever.

The mosquito borne disease continues to affect all health districts, with most cases reported as occurring in persons who live in the Pembroke, Kingstown and Calliaqua Health Districts. The Marriaqua and Chateaubelair Health Districts are now ranked as 4th and 5th for the number of reported cases of Dengue Fever. Persons in the 0-15-year-old age group continue to account for the majority of cases, with an attack rate of 3.54% in the 5-14-year age group.

The Surveillance Committee of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment confirms that a ten (10) year old female with an underlying cardiac condition was admitted to the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital on November 14 and died on Friday November 20 from Severe Dengue Fever. The death of this child brings to seven (7) the number of persons who have died as a direct result of dengue fever during this current epidemic.

The Vector Control Unit of the Environmental Health Department of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment continues to implement an intensified integrated vector control programme aimed at reducing the mosquito which spreads the dengue virus, through source reduction. An increased number of fogging teams has allowed for more frequent fogging with larvicidal agents in all communities in a targeted manner. The effectiveness of these interventions is confirmed by the reduction in the mosquito breeding indices throughout the country in the first half of November when compared with the month of October 2020.

The fight against dengue fever is a shared responsibility and we must continue to work together to further reduce the number of new cases and the occurrence of bad outcomes. The public is urged to:

1. Reduce the breeding of the mosquito by discarding improperly stored water or covering properly collected water.
2. Reduce rubbish and overgrown bush.
3. Wear light colored clothes with long pants and long sleeves.
4. Use insect repellents and mosquito nets to prevent mosquito bite.
5. Open homes to allow increased effectiveness of fogging by the Vector Control Unit.

These actions are important to prevent further spread of the dengue virus to those who have not had dengue fever.



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Symptoms of dengue fever include fever, headache with pain behind the eyes, a rash, abdominal pain, vomiting and bleeding. Home treatments for dengue fever should focus on reducing the fever by using cool, not cold baths, acetaminophen (paracetamol) not ibuprofen and maintaining hydration by drinking lots of fluids such as coconut water. The early and consistent use of papaya leaf extract for five days in persons with dengue fever symptoms, is encouraged. Persons with symptoms of dengue fever are asked to seek medical care early and comply with the advice given to avoid the possible complications of dengue fever infections.

Persons who have pre-existing conditions such as sickle cell disease, kidney problems or heart disease or who previously had dengue fever, zika, or are children of mothers who had dengue during their pregnancy, are at increased risk to develop severe dengue fever. These individuals and their guardians are asked to consistently utilize measures known to reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes and to be aware of the warning signs of severe dengue.

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