

# **Dengue Fever Awareness: Combating the Menace in Bangladesh**

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Dengue fever, a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes, has emerged as a critical public health concern in Bangladesh. The country has experienced recurrent outbreaks of dengue, particularly during the monsoon season when mosquito populations thrive. However, Bangladesh is now confronting a distressing escalation of the dengue outbreak, exacerbated by rapid urbanization and climatic changes.

The number of cases and fatalities has been steadily rising, presenting an alarming public health crisis that demands immediate attention. In 2022 alone, Bangladesh recorded a staggering 281 deaths due to dengue, further emphasizing the urgency of the situation. In the first seven months of this year, around 20,000 people have been infected with dengue. More than a hundred patients lost their lives. Most of the dengue patients are from Dhaka.

The Directorate General of Health Service has opened a control room to monitor the dengue situation. Health Department is providing hotline service at 16263. Although dengue patients are receiving treatment in many hospitals in the capital, the government has declared DNC Hospital in Mohakhali as a dedicated hospital for dengue to handle the pressure of dengue patients. The cost of dengue test in all government hospitals has also been reduced from Tk 100 to Tk 50.

Two city corporations of Dhaka are running mosquito eradication campaign. Potential habitats for dengue mosquitoes are being destroyed. Citizens also need to be aware of this. If water accumulates in and around residence, it must be thrown away.

Dengue fever is caused by the dengue virus, primarily transmitted by the Aedes mosquito, particularly Aedes aegypti. These mosquitoes breed in stagnant water, found in various settings such as water containers, discarded tires, and puddles. The virus exists in four different serotypes, and infection with one provides lifelong immunity to that specific serotype. However, subsequent infections by different serotypes increase the risk of severe dengue, also known as dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF).

Dengue fever often presents with flu-like symptoms, including high fever, severe headache, joint and muscle pain, and rash. Other signs may include nausea, vomiting, and mild bleeding from the nose or gums. In severe cases, DHF may occur, characterized by bleeding, organ impairment, and, in some cases, death. Early diagnosis is crucial for effective management and prevention of complications.

Prevention plays a vital role in controlling dengue fever. Creating awareness among individuals, communities is essential to bring dengue situation under control. Local government bodies must ensure proper waste disposal, drainage and disposing of unused containers to reduce mosquito breeding grounds. Effective mosquito control measures, including the use of insecticides and insecticide-treated bed nets, can help reduce mosquito populations. Engagement of ward commissions and city corporations is vital to the success of dengue prevention efforts. They can organize awareness campaigns to educate communities about dengue and its prevention. Schools

and educational institutions should organize awareness campaigns, emphasizing preventive measures.

Individuals should wear long sleeves, pants, and use mosquito repellents, especially during peak mosquito activity hours (dawn and dusk). Installing window screens and using mosquito nets provide additional protection. Raising awareness about dengue symptoms, preventive measures, and the importance of early medical attention can empower communities to take proactive steps in combating dengue fever.

Media plays a crucial role in disseminating information and creating awareness. Mass media channels, including television, radio, and social media platforms, can be utilized to reach a wider audience and educate them about dengue fever and eradication of dengue mosquito. Collaboration between various sectors, such as local government bodies, health, education, and urban planning, is essential in tackling dengue fever. Research institutions and universities should conduct studies to understand the local dynamics of dengue transmission, vector behavior, and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

Dengue fever continues to pose a significant health threat in Bangladesh, particularly during the monsoon season. By raising awareness about the disease, its symptoms, and preventive measures, individuals and communities can play a crucial role in reducing the burden of dengue. Adopting preventive measures, such as eliminating mosquito breeding sites and practicing personal protection, can help break the transmission cycle. Furthermore, community engagement, government initiatives, media involvement, and research collaboration are vital in creating a comprehensive and sustainable approach to combat dengue fever effectively. Together, we can strive for a dengue-free Bangladesh and safeguard the health and well-being of the citizens.

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