



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

Ministerial Building, Kingstown,
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 1, 2020

Contact: Permanent Secretary

Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

DENGUE OUTBREAK

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment confirms that a 40-year-old female of McCarthy is the fifth (5th) person to die from complications of Dengue Fever. The patient reported feeling unwell for one week and presented to the Accident and Emergency Department on Wednesday September 30, 2020 and was admitted to the ICU in a critical condition.

As of Tuesday September 29, there were 514 laboratory confirmed cases of dengue fever recorded in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Hospital Services Programme and the Community Health Services Programme of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment continue to report increased patients presenting with symptoms consistent with Dengue Fever. Measures to manage this surge in demand for care have been implemented and include increased nurses, doctors and beds.

The Pharmaceutical Services Programme has now concluded that papaya leaf extract can be used to safely augment the care for patients with Dengue Fever. A statement providing the justification for this recommendation and the guidance for the use of papaya leaf extract has been released.

The Vector Control Unit of the Environmental Health Department of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment working with partners including BRAGSA, the Ministry of Agriculture and NGOs, continues to aggressively implement source reduction strategies, including increased fogging, the clearing of river mouths and debushing. Health Promotion activities, also part of the Integrated Vector Control Strategy (IVC), will continue with the engagement of communities, churches and other non-governmental organizations.

The fight against Dengue Fever is a shared responsibility. The public is therefore urged to continue to work with the Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment to reduce the risk of persons being infected with Dengue Fever. Exposure to the mosquito which causes dengue can be minimized by:

1. Reducing the breeding of the mosquito by discarding improperly stored water or covering properly collected water.
2. Reducing rubbish and overgrown bush.
3. Wearing light colored clothing with long pants and long sleeves.
4. Using insect repellents and mosquito nets to prevent mosquito bites. These actions are important to prevent further spread both to those who have not had dengue fever, as well as those who already have dengue fever.
5. Opening homes to allow increased effectiveness of fogging by the Vector control unit.

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, papaya leaf extract and maintaining hydration by drinking a lot of fluids such as coconut water. Persons with symptoms of Dengue Fever are asked to seek medical care early to avoid the possible complications of delayed care.