



**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

Above Normal Increase in Dengue Cases

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment is taking all necessary steps to prevent a severe outbreak of dengue fever in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

On July 25, 2020, St. Vincent and the Grenadines recorded forty-eight (48) laboratory confirmed cases of Dengue. The number of laboratory confirmed cases as of August 25, 2020 has now increased to seventy-four (74). This increase is not typical for this period and Vincentians are urged to take the requisite precautions to prevent further spread of the illness. Laboratory confirmed dengue cases for the period January to August 2020 have not been confined to any particular health district. However, the majority of cases have been reported in the Pembroke Health District which includes communities between Campden Park and Barrouallie. Laboratory confirmed cases recorded to date are between the ages of six months and eighty-six (86) years old. Forty-six (46) of these cases have resulted in hospitalisation.

Dengue is a flu-like illness spread by the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito. Symptoms of Dengue usually begin four to ten days after infection, and include a high fever, headache, vomiting, muscle and joint pains, and a skin rash. Persistent fever, vomiting, and abdominal pain or tenderness, or bleeding, are warning signs which suggest that dengue fever disease is taking a more severe course. Persons experiencing these symptoms should seek medical attention immediately as severe dengue may cause death.

There is no specific treatment for dengue. Persons experiencing symptoms of dengue should use pain relievers as prescribed by their healthcare provider. Medicines which contain aspirin should be avoided as they may worsen bleeding. Adequate rest and hydration are also important.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment has intensified vector control measures and continues to closely monitor vector activity and

syndromes related to dengue fever. Clinical care and treatment guidelines have also been shared with healthcare providers.

Research conducted by both the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Pan American Health Organisation/World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO) shows that drums and tyres are the main mosquito breeding sources in our countries.

Vincentians are urged to play their part to reduce the mosquito population and to destroy breeding sites by:

1. Properly covering water storage containers such as buckets, drums and tanks.
2. Removing stagnant water sources such as old tires, bottles, bottle caps, empty coconut shells and buckets from around homes and communities in an effort to destroy all possible mosquito breeding sites.
3. Cleaning guttering
4. Sealing septic tanks
5. Scrubbing the walls of frequently used water containers to remove mosquito eggs
6. Regularly changing water in animal and pet containers

Additionally, persons should take measures to protect themselves from mosquito bites by:

1. Using insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, IR 3535 and Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus
2. Wearing long sleeves and long pants as well as light colored clothing.

The Ministry of Health, Wellness and the Environment is reminding citizens that: "Our health is a shared responsibility." Let us continue to play our respective parts in controlling the spread of diseases." For more information, please contact the Ministry or your nearest health care provider.

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