

Dengue Fever

It is an infectious disease produced by a virus (Dengue virus). There are 4 stereotypes of this Dengue virus (DEN-1, DEN -2, DEN -3 and DEN-4). Out of these, DEN -2 and DEN -3 are frequently associated with severe illness.

Dengue is transmitted by the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito (mainly Aedes aegypti). This type of mosquito is a tropical and subtropical species, spread all over the world, mostly between latitude 35°N and 35°S.

Aedes mosquitoes are infected when they feed themselves with the blood of an infected person, as the virus circulates in his blood for two – seven days (during this period the infected person develops fever in).

Semeiology:

After an incubation period of 4-10 days, the infection with any of the 4 stereotypes of Dengue virus, can produce a large spectrum of clinical manifestations, most of the infections being asymptomatic or subclinical.

Some persons develop symptoms close to flu.

The characteristics of Dengue fever vary according to the age of the patient: nursing and young children can have fever with eruptions; older children and adult can have low fever or classical disease with sudden high fever, headaches, eyes pain, joints and muscles pain and coetaneous eruptions. Some patients can present throat pain, inflammation of the pharynx and conjunctiva, sick, throwing and anorexia.

There can slight hemorrhagic manifestations such as nose and gums bleedings, petechiae, vaginal bleedings (for women at fertile age), or gastro-intestinal bleedings, but these are not common manifestations, they indicate a severe clinical form of the disease.

Severe form (hemorrhagic Dengue fever):

Is a potentially mortal complication characterized by high fever (41 ° C) which can be accompanied by convulsions, increasing size of the liver, circulatory insufficiency, severe hemorrhages. Children have increased risk for developing severe form of the disease.

Recovery after the infection with Dengue virus confers immunity for the whole life towards the virus stereotype of the infection and a partial and transitory protection (2-3 months) towards the other three types of stereotypes.

Treatment:

There is no specific treatment for Dengue fever. For severe form (hemorrhagic fever) maintaining the volume of the circulated blood is the main objective of the treatment.

Preventing measures:

Consist in the individual protection against mosquitos' bites.

The following are recommended:

During the stay in endemic area you should wear long sleeves clothes, long trousers and socks during the day when he mosquitoes are active. You can use substances against mosquitoes on your clothes and on the parts of your body which are not covered by clothes (ex DEET: N, N-diethyl- 3-methylbenzamide).

During the sleep (and mainly during the days), the bed shall be protected by a special net against mosquitoes which shall be previously treated with insecticide substances.

In your room you can use insecticide substances under different forms (aerosols, impregnated bands, pills).

If during your stay in the endemic area or short time after your return from there you have fever and headaches, eye pains, joints and muscles pain and coetaneous eruptions you should see medical care.

Source: World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/topics/dengue/en/>