Prevent Dengue & Chikungunya
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What is dengue?

Dengue is one of the most common mosquito-borne viral infections. The infection is spread from one person to another through the bite of infectious mosquitoes, either *Aedes aegypti* or *Aedes albopictus*.

There are 4 distinct types of dengue virus, called DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3 and DEN-4. Dengue can be mild, as in most cases, or severe, as in few cases. It can cause serious illness and death among children. In Myanmar, July to August is peak season for transmission of dengue - coinciding with monsoon.

How every one of us can help prevent dengue

- community awareness for mosquito breeding control is key
- cover, empty and clean domestic water storage containers -- weekly is best
- remove from the environment plastic bottles, plastic bags, fruit cans, discarded tyres -- for these are preferred mosquito breeding sites by *aedes aegypti* (depicted) and *aedes albopictus*
- drain water collection points around the house
- seek advice of a health professional if you have multiple signs or symptoms of dengue

How to recognize dengue? what are signs and symptoms?

- high fever
- severe headache
- pain behind the eyes
- muscle and joint pains
- severe abdominal pain
- nausea, vomiting
- body rash

What is the treatment?

- There is no specific treatment for dengue.
- At the same time, early detection and proper care decreases suffering and prevents death from dengue, very significantly.

As shown above, dengue is cyclical in Myanmar, alternating annually, as is the case in many countries.

At the same time, the number of dengue cases, and deaths due to dengue, over the period 2015 to 2018, both show a decreasing trend overall.

Examples of how national and local authorities contribute

- providing support for dengue management at health facilities.
- strengthening online reporting of dengue, using electronic based information system.
- health literacy promotion for communities and basic health staff.
- strategic direction; implementation research; intersectoral collaboration for implementation.

Examples of how WHO and partners contribute

- supporting the development of technical guidelines, for prevention and care, including information, education, risk communication.
- prior to peak transmission season, facilitating advocacy by Myanmar state and regional health authorities to advance communities’ preparedness for dengue prevention & control.
- trend analysis and surveillance support.

Dengue situation in Myanmar

Cases and deaths 2015-2019

Source: VBDC, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health & Sports, 2019

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What is Chikungunya?

- Chikungunya is a mosquito borne viral disease transmitted by the bite of same infectious mosquito as dengue.
- It was first described in 1952, during an outbreak in southern Tanzania.
- Chikungunya derives from Kimakonde language, spoken by ethnic groups in Tanzania and Mozambique, meaning ‘to become contorted’. It describes a ‘bent’ appearance, by sufferers with joint pain.
- Chikungunya shares clinical signs with dengue, and one can be mistaken for the other.
- Chikungunya is at times called elephant flu, erroneously. As mentioned, as a mosquito-borne disease, it has nothing to do with ‘flu’.

How to recognize Chikungunya?

- Sudden onset of fever and severe joint pain.
- Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash.
- Joint pain is often debilitating and can vary in duration (few days to weeks).
- unlike dengue, chikungunya is not fatal.

Chikungunya situation in Myanmar

- National Health Laboratory has, for several years, been serologically testing suspected samples. Chikungunya cases were reported from Yangon Region in 2007-8 and 2011.
- In 2009, serologically positive cases were reported from Mandalay, Naypyitaw, Tanintharyi Regions, and from Mon and Shan States.
- Surveillance is gradually improving. In 2019 (until 15 August), 35 cases were reported from eight States & Regions of Myanmar.

What needs to be remembered?

- Signs and symptoms of chikungunya overlap with dengue.
- Aedes aegypti or Aedes albopictus mosquitoes can transmit both dengue and chikungunya.
- Prevention and control of chikungunya is the same as for dengue.
- Most patients of chikungunya recover fully. In some cases, joint pain may persist for months.

What is the treatment?

- There is no specific treatment for Chikungunya.
- Treatment is directed primarily at relief of symptoms -- by taking plenty of fluids, and by appropriate use of paracetamol, for example, to ease joint pain and fever.