Homecare for Dengue Patients

How to Care for Your Sick Family Member

Your child or family member might have dengue. It is important for you to carefully watch them because dengue can rapidly become severe between the third and seventh day of illness when the fever is going away. Your doctor can order tests to determine if your sick family member has dengue.

Keep the name and telephone number of your doctor available, and call if you have questions.

With Fever

Bed rest

- Let your sick child or family member rest as much as possible.

Control high fever

- Do not give ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), aspirin, or aspirin-containing drugs.
- Sponge the patient's skin with cool water if fever remains high.
- Give acetaminophen or paracetamol (Tylenol) every 6 hours if needed for high fever (maximum 4 doses per day).

Prevent dehydration

Give plenty of fluids, and watch for signs of dehydration, which occurs when a person loses too much body fluid from fever, vomiting, or if he or she does not drink enough fluids. Bring your child or sick family member to a clinic or emergency room if any of the following signs appear:

- Decrease in urination (check the number of wet diapers or trips to the bathroom)
- Few or no tears when a child cries
- Dry mouth, tongue, or lips
- Sunken eyes
- Listlessness, overly agitated, or confused
- Rapid heartbeat (more than 100 beats per minute)
- Cold or clammy fingers and toes
- Sunken soft spot (fontanel) in an infant's head

Prevent spread of dengue inside your house

Mosquitoes that bite the affected family member can go on to bite and infect others.

- Allow the sick child or family member to rest and sleep under a bed net or use insect repellant while feverish.
- Kill all mosquitoes in the house and empty containers that carry water on patios.
- Place screens on windows and doors to prevent mosquitoes from entering the house.

As Fever Goes Away

Watch for warning signs

Although the fever is going away, this phase of dengue can be dangerous for some patients.

- Watch for warning signs as temperature declines, 3-7 days after symptoms began.

Return IMMEDIATELY to the clinic or emergency department if any of the following warning signs appear:

- Severe abdominal pain or persistent vomiting
- Red spots or patches on the skin
- Bleeding from nose or gums
- Vomiting blood or blood in stools
- Drowsiness or irritability
- Pale, cold, or clammy skin
- Difficulty breathing

Cover sleeping areas to keep away mosquitos.

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Division of Vector-Borne Diseases

CS238777