

Public health advisory: Dengue in the Pacific

To:	General Practitioners, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments, Health Pathways, Hospital Specialists, Pharmacists, Hauora Māori and Pacific Health Providers, Laboratories and NZMN, NPHS national and regional services.
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Title:	Dengue in the Pacific

Please share the following information with relevant staff in your organisation.

Key information

Dengue cases in the Pacific are at their highest level since 2016. Several Pacific Island countries, including Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, and Tuvalu are experiencing a rise in cases of dengue fever.

Samoa has been particularly affected, with more than 2,000 cases reported since an outbreak was declared on 17 April 2025. Sadly, some people have died from the disease.

There is currently no dengue transmission within New Zealand.

Clinicians are asked to:

1. Advise patients travelling to regions with dengue to take steps to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes.
2. Be alert to dengue symptoms in symptomatic patients returning from the Pacific Islands within 3 weeks.
3. Notify public health on suspicion of dengue. Patient isolation is not required.

Transmission of dengue

- Dengue fever is not spread from person to person. A person becomes infected with the dengue virus after being bitten by an infected Aedes mosquito.

Symptoms of dengue

- While many people with dengue do not have symptoms, or only feel mildly unwell, some may experience the following symptoms:
 - sudden onset of fever
 - headache, particularly retro orbital
 - myalgia and arthralgia

- a fine rash, which may be itchy, usually begins on the extremities, but spares the palms and soles of the feet
 - weakness
 - depression
 - anorexia
 - abnormal taste
 - sore throat
 - coughing
 - vomiting
 - abdominal pain.
- Symptoms usually start 3 to 14 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. They can last from 2 to 7 days.

Warning signs of severe dengue

- A small number of people may get severe dengue within 2 to 5 days of their symptoms starting. This is more likely to occur the second time a person is infected with dengue, when it may constitute dengue haemorrhagic fever.
- Warning signs include:
 - severe abdominal pain
 - mucosal bleeding
 - liver enlargement
 - fluid accumulation
 - persistent vomiting.
- People with severe dengue symptoms should be referred to hospital for management of haemorrhagic manifestations and possible hypovolaemic shock.

Management of dengue

- Please follow HealthPathways advice for Fever in Returning Travellers.
- Laboratory testing involves full blood count (leucopaenia, thrombocytopenia, elevated ALT, increased haematocrit), testing for the dengue virus (PCR) or antigen, and/or serology tests.
- Treatment is supportive, but NSAIDs (ibuprofen/aspirin) should be avoided. Seek infectious diseases advice if concerned, including if your patient has previously had dengue or there are any signs of bleeding.
- Public health management: no isolation is required. Notification should be made to the local medical officer of health on suspicion.

Advice for patients travelling to Pacific countries with dengue outbreaks

- Before travel, advise patients to:
 - protect themselves from mosquito bites if they are travelling to regions with dengue
 - follow local public health advice while overseas
 - seek healthcare locally urgently if they develop symptoms
 - contact their GP or Healthline on 0800 611 116 if they develop a fever or other symptoms within 3 weeks of their return to New Zealand.

- Dengue vaccination is not available in New Zealand.

Information and resources for patients

Further information is available from:

- Info.health.nz: [Dengue](#)
- Safe Travel: [Dengue fever](#)
- Government of Samoa: [Declaration of Dengue Fever Outbreak for Samoa](#)

Translated information is also available in the following languages:

- **Samoa** - Info.health: [Dengue fever](#)
- **Cook Islands Māori** - HealthEd: [Dengue fever FAQs](#)
- **Fijian** - HealthEd: [Dengue fever FAQs](#)
- **Tongan** – HealthEd: [Dengue fever FAQs](#)

We thank you for your support in distributing this information and helping to protect New Zealanders travelling overseas from dengue.

Ngā mihi

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