

## Dengue Fever: A guide for parents

Dear Parent,

As you may be aware, there have been some incidences of Dengue Fever in Mumbai. While we are sure you are aware and are already taking necessary precautions, we would like to share some guidelines and precautionary steps for you to consider for your child as well.

The Healthspring team has put together useful information, including common questions that you may have and also some easy steps for you to take, to protect your child.

Please go through it and call us, or write to us, in case there are any further questions or if you require further information. You can call 6130-3535 and ask to speak to me or any of the other physicians, or reach Shivani Dawlatjada at shivani.dawlatjada@healthspring.in or on 98330-08636.

### What is dengue?

Dengue fever is caused by a flavivirus, transferred through a bite of female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. This mosquito is active during the daytime and most active during the two hours after sunrise and a few hours before sunset.

### Is dengue contagious? How can I get it?

The virus is not contagious and cannot be spread directly from person to person. Patients who are already infected with the dengue virus can transmit the infection (for 4–5 days, and up to a maximum of 12 days) via these *Aedes* mosquitoes after their first symptoms appear.

### How do I know if my child has dengue?

We have listed for you some of the common symptoms associated with dengue. If you notice some or many of these in your child, please contact us immediately –

- Sudden onset of fever (in the range 39-40°C or 103-105°F) for up to a week
- Severe headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Pain behind the eyes
- Pain in the back, especially in older children, above 10 years
- A rash may appear about the same time that the fever subsides

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Severe dengue is a potentially deadly complication due to plasma leaking, fluid accumulation, respiratory distress, severe bleeding, or organ impairment. Warning signs occur 3–7 days after the first symptoms in conjunction with a decrease in temperature (below 38°C/ 100°F) and include:

- Severe abdominal pain
- Persistent vomiting
- Rapid breathing
- Bleeding gums
- Fatigue, restlessness

The next 24–48 hours of the critical stage can be lethal, and proper medical care is needed to avoid complications and risk of death.

### **What should you do as a parent?**

Please visit your doctor or call us immediately if you notice any of the above described symptoms. Complete rest and consuming a lot of fluids and staying hydrated is most important. The child's condition needs to be constantly monitored. You can administer paracetamol in the right dosage after checking with your doctor, to manage fever and pain.

### **When can my child go back to school?**

The child gets well usually within one to two weeks and could go back to school after he/she has gained back his/her appetite and stamina. It is important that he/she gets enough rest, and is able to regain enough strength before coming back to school.

### **What can I do to protect my family from dengue?**

Unfortunately, there is no vaccination currently available for dengue fever. Some of the things you can do to limit exposure to mosquitoes is to use effective repellent sprays, avoid standing water in pots/plants at home, and be especially cautious in the early morning right after sunrise, and in the evening, before sunset.

We hope this answers your questions, and feel assured that Oberoi International School and Healthspring are vigilant, and will help keep your child healthy. Please do feel free to reach out to us if you have any more questions.

Dr. Khullar  
Paediatrician, Healthspring