



World Health Day: Protect yourself from vector-borne diseases

Key facts

1. Vector-borne diseases account for more than 17% of all infectious diseases, causing more than 1 million deaths annually.
 2. More than 2.5 billion people in over 100 countries are at risk of contracting dengue alone.
 3. Malaria causes more than 600 000 deaths every year globally, most of them children under 5 years of age.
 4. Many of these diseases are preventable through informed protective measures.
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About vector-borne diseases

Vectors are organisms that transmit pathogens and parasites from one infected person (or animal) to another, causing serious diseases in human populations.

Many of these vectors are bloodsucking insects, which ingest disease-producing microorganisms during a blood meal from an infected host (human or animal) and later inject it into a new host during their subsequent blood meal.



Mosquitoes are the best known disease vector. Others include ticks, flies, sandflies.

These diseases are commonly found in tropical and sub-tropical regions and places where access to safe drinking-water and sanitation systems is problematic.

The world's fastest growing vector-borne disease is dengue, with a 30-fold increase in disease incidence over the last 50 years.

Distribution of these diseases is determined by a complex dynamic of environmental and social factors.

Globalization of travel and trade, unplanned urbanization and environmental challenges such as climate change are having a significant impact on disease transmission in recent years. Some diseases, such as dengue, chikungunya and West Nile virus, are emerging in countries where they were previously unknown.

Changes in agricultural practices due to variation in temperature and rainfall can affect the transmission of vector-borne diseases. Climate information can be used to monitor and predict distribution and longer-term trends in malaria and other climate-sensitive diseases.

Some vector-borne diseases:

Disease	Descriptor
Dengue	Mosquito-borne infection that may cause lethal complications
Chikungunya	Viral disease transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes
Congo-Crimean haemorrhagic fever	Severe illness caused by a number of viruses
Leishmaniasis	Infection is caused if bitten by female sandflies
Lymphatic filariasis	Infection occurs when filarial parasites are transmitted to humans through mosquitoes
Lyme disease	Disease caused by infected ticks
Malaria	Disease caused by a parasite <i>plasmodium</i> , transmitted via infected mosquitoes
Yellow fever	Viral disease transmitted via <i>aedes</i> mosquitoes

General Preventive measures

- A. Ensure window and door screens are in good condition
- B. Use mosquito coils or plug-in mosquito repellent devices
- C. Wear long, light colored loose clothing to help protect yourself from bites.

- D. Use insect Repellant on skin and clothes - applying diethyltoluamide (DEET)-containing insect repellants to exposed skin and permethrin to clothing
- E. Sleep in netted or screened area
- F. Minimize exposed skin surface after dark
- G. Avoid swimming or wading in fresh water
- H. Bath and wash hair within 2 hours of spending time in high risk area
- I. Tip out water from things like pot plant bases, plastic containers or buckets.
- J. Store anything that can hold water undercover or in a dry place, including tyres, gardening equipment, toys, buckets.

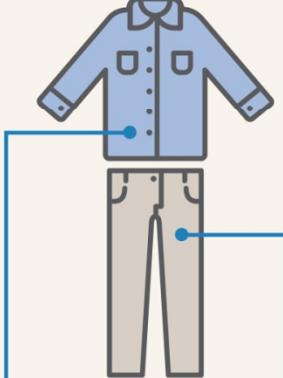
TAKE SIMPLE MEASURES TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

Get vaccinated against yellow fever and Japanese encephalitis



Install  **window screens**





Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and trousers

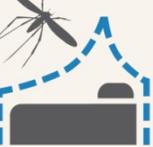
Use **insect repellent**



Get rid of stagnant water from places **where mosquitoes breed**, such as in old containers, flower pots and used tyres



Sleep under an **insecticide-treated bed net**



For more information, contact your health-care professional
www.who.int/world-health-day

More than half of the world's population is at risk from vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue. Yet, we can protect ourselves and our families by taking simple preventive measures. So, let's come together and spread the word on simple preventive measures which would curb the occurrence of vector borne diseases.

Reference:

<http://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2014/en/>