

# WHO: Dengue Fever Numbers Rise on La Réunion (now common in 100 countries)



The female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito can transmit the viruses that cause dengue fever.

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The World Health Organization on Tuesday said tens of thousands of people are believed to be infected with dengue fever on La Réunion. The island - a French territory - is a popular vacation **destination** in the Indian Ocean.

Dengue is a set of viruses found in **tropical** and sub-tropical parts of the world. Humans get dengue from being bitten by **mosquitos** infected with the virus.

Health officials on the island told the WHO of the disease outbreak in March 2018. About 50,000 probable cases of the disease were reported between 2018 and April of this year. That includes 22,000 so far in 2019, the health agency said in a statement.

The WHO described the rise of confirmed and probable cases reported last year

as **unprecedented**.

There is no treatment. But with early discovery and good medical care, fewer than one percent of people infected die from the disease.

The WHO said 14 people have died in the Réunion outbreak since 2018. The territory has a population of 866,500.

Around the world, the number of dengue cases dropped from 2017 to 2018. But there has been a huge increase in 2019, especially in Vietnam, Australia, Cambodia, China, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore.

### **More about dengue**

About one in four people infected with dengue will get sick. Of those who do get sick, the **symptoms** can be **mild** to severe.

Severe dengue can be deadly and often requires hospitalization. Only a small percentage of people get severe dengue. Mild dengue can be mistaken for other sicknesses, such as influenza.

Symptoms often begin four to seven days after being bitten and commonly last two days to one week. They can include high fever, severe headaches, fatigue, **vomiting**, and, in severe cases, bleeding.

The first dengue vaccine, Dengvaxia, was approved in 2015 for use in Mexico, Brazil and the Philippines. Several other countries followed in 2016.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Dengvaxia in 2019. The WHO says the vaccine should not be given to people who have not had an earlier dengue infection.

The World Health Organization notes that dengue fever is now common in over 100 countries. Forty percent of the world's population lives in an area at risk for dengue.

I'm Caty Weaver.

*Tom Miles wrote this report for Reuters news agency. Alice Bryant adapted it for Learning English with additional information from WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ashley Thompson was the editor.*

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## Words in This Story

**destination** – *n.* a place to which a person is going or something is being sent

**tropical** – *adj.* of or relating to the part of the world that is near the equator where the weather is very warm

**mosquito** – *n.* a small flying insect that bites the skin of people and animals and sucks their blood

**unprecedented** – *adj.* not done or experienced before

**symptom** – *n.* a change in the body or mind which indicates that a disease is present

**mild** – *adj.* not harsh or severe

**vomiting** – *gerund.* the act of food or liquid that is in your stomach coming out through your mouth because you are sick (verb: vomit)

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Source:

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