

## PRIME NEWS

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# '500 cases reported a day'

**ALARMING:** Urgent action needed before situation worsens, says health deputy D-G

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**T**HE Health Ministry has raised the alarm about dengue outbreak, urging the people and agencies to act urgently to put in place measures to contain the situation before it worsens.

From 2000 to Jan 16 this year, 707,227 dengue cases have been reported with 1,721 deaths.

In 2000, the Health Ministry recorded 7,103 dengue cases and 42 deaths. But merely two weeks into this year, 6,837 cases and 14 deaths were reported, an average of more than 500 cases a day.

Health deputy director-general (public health) Datuk Dr Lokman Hakim Sulaiman said the main factors contributing to the sharp rise in

the disease were poor environmental cleanliness, littering and poor garbage management.

He also cited mobility of the population, high population densities and rapid urbanisation as being other factors.

Aside from that, he said, the El Nino phenomenon that was expected to last until next month would lead to warmer temperatures. Mosquitoes will breed actively, increasing the frequency of mosquito bites and the spread of dengue virus.

"In the dry and hot weather, the life cycle of an Aedes mosquito, from the egg to the adult stage, will be shorter and this will increase the mosquito population.

"The density of Aedes mosquitoes will also increase two weeks after the rainy season, leading to a jump in dengue cases.

"The local authorities should not be (solely) blamed because there are many factors that cause the spike in dengue cases," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Dr Lokman said to ensure envi-

ronmental cleanliness, the local authorities should increase enforcement activities, especially in illegal rubbish dumping sites, and make arrangements for timely garbage collection at least thrice a week.

"Apart from ensuring a proper solid waste management and a clean environment, the authorities should step up dengue control activities, especially in the Klang Valley.

"This involves active participation from the Shah Alam, Petaling Jaya, Kajang, Gombak and Klang municipal councils.

"These are 'fich' local authorities and, therefore, they should invest more resources in dengue control activities and implement recycling programmes."

Dr Lokman said the key strategy to reduce dengue cases was to empower the community through "source reduction" activities and clean-up campaigns.

Global evidence, he said, showed that dengue control could never be achieved or sustained without com-

munity empowerment and ownership.

"However, in reality, the sustainability of community involvement in dengue prevention is very difficult to establish."

Dr Lokman said Aedes mosquitoes could be predominantly found in urban areas, especially in densely populated places such as the Klang Valley, Petaling, Hulu Langat, Klang, Gombak and Kinta, which have the highest number of hot spots in Malaysia.

Last year, Selangor topped the list with the highest number of dengue cases and fatalities at 63,198 cases and 127 deaths, followed by Johor (15,743 cases) and Perak (9,466 cases).

Dr Lokman said to overcome the dengue menace, the Health Ministry would strengthen dengue prevention and control activities, including improving environmental cleanliness by all agencies and the public, and increasing source reduction activities.

The ministry, he said, would also promote and implement cleanliness campaigns and activities in vacant lands, residential areas, construction sites and other premises with a high Aedes-breeding index.



"We will increase enforcement, especially in construction sites, with other agencies such as the Construction Industry Development Board, Occupational Safety and Health Department and local authorities."

Dr Lokman noted that it was high time for the authorities to increase punitive measures instead of merely urging people to cooperate in eradicating mosquito-breeding grounds.

"The Destruction of Disease Bearing Insect Act 1975 should be strictly enforced. We will continue to issue compound to households that breed Aedes.

"We will also continue to focus on construction sites and issue stop-work order for two weeks if any premise is found to be a breeding ground and bring them to court for repeated offences, as we have done before. As such, the public will be more cautious and play a more proactive role in dengue prevention activities."

Dr Lokman noted that everyone

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## DENGUE CASES RECORDED FROM 2000 TO JAN 2016 (JAN 3 - JAN 16)

Year	Dengue cases	Dengue Deaths
2000	7,103	42
2001	16,368	50
2002	32,767	99
2003	31,545	69
2004	33,895	102
2005	39,654	107
2006	38,556	92
2007	48,846	98
2008	49,335	112
2009	41,486	88
2010	46,171	134
2011	19,884	36
2012	21,900	35
2013	43,346	92
2014	108,698	215
<b>2015</b>	<b>120,836</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>6,837</b>	<b>14</b>

## DENGUE CASES AND FATALITIES ACCORDING TO STATES

State	2015		2016 (Jan 3 to Jan 16)	
	Case	Death	Case	Death
PERLIS	258	1	24	0
KEDAH	1,000	14	60	0
PENANG	5,830	19	344	2
PERAK	9,466	25	263	0
SELANGOR	63,198	127	3,358	6
FT/PUTRAJAYA	8,332	34	483	1
N. SEMBILAN	2,454	16	229	2
MALACCA	2,420	8	146	0
JOHOR	15,743	51	1,092	0
PAHANG	3,001	16	182	0
TERENGGANU	1,455	5	266	3
KELANTAN	2,850	7	124	0
SARAWAK	1,923	3	60	0
SABAH	2,904	10	206	0
LABUAN	2	0	0	0
<b>MALAYSIA</b>	<b>120,836</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>6,837</b>	<b>14</b>

## PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO BE TAKEN:

### PEOPLE:

- Conduct weekly 'search-and-destroy' activities.
- Avoid littering and have a proper solid waste management. Practise recycling.
- Wear long-sleeve shirts and long pants, and use insect repellent. Use aerosol sprays or other insecticide vaporisers to kill Aedes mosquitoes.
- Seek immediate treatment if there are symptoms of dengue fever (joint pain, body ache, loss of appetite, rash, vomiting, headache and diarrhoea).

### SCHOOLS AND VARSITIES:

- Conduct weekly search-and-destroy activities.
- During long school holiday, use larvicide such as temephos in toilet bowls, flower pots and water containers to prevent mosquito breeding.

### LOCAL COUNCILS:

- Have proper domestic waste collection and disposal.
- Strict enforcement activities, especially against illegal dumping and littering.
- Proper rubbish collection, and provide enough dustbins in public places.

### HEALTH MINISTRY

- Intensify dengue prevention and control activities through the implementation of 'Mega Operation', especially in problematic states.
- Implementation of a new control strategy such as Outdoor Residual Spraying using Deltamethrin in selected dengue hot spots.
- Intensify enforcement.

### WORKS MINISTRY:

- Ensure developers and contractors take measures to destroy mosquitoes in construction sites.
- Review design of the building to avoid potential breeding areas and suggest recommendations.

### EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION MINISTRIES:

- Ensure schools and universities/colleges nationwide are free of Aedes-breeding areas.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND MULTIMEDIA MINISTRY:

- Increase health promotion activities on dengue prevention for the public.

### CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD MALAYSIA AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Ensure developers and contractors follow guidelines on dengue prevention and control in construction sites.

### CIVIL DEFENCE DEPARTMENT AND THE PEOPLE'S VOLUNTEER CORPS

- Involve in search-and-destroy activities.

