

Singapore fights back against worsening dengue outbreak

June 12 2013

Singapore is fighting back against a rapidly worsening dengue epidemic by distributing insect repellants to every household and recruiting hundreds of disease control officers, officials said.

Two Singaporeans have died from the virus so far this year and weekly cases hit an all-time high of 820 in the period ending June 8, the National Environment Agency (NEA) said in a statement issued late Tuesday.

More than 9,300 people were infected this year as of Tuesday, fast nearing the 13,984 infections in 2005, the worst year on record, official data showed.

NEA said its officers and volunteers would be distributing 1.2 million insect repellants to all households in the compact island of over five million from July to August this year.

This would "help residents protect themselves from [mosquito bites](#) and thus break the chain of transmission," it said.

The agency is also hiring 300 new officers to supplement its current 850-strong disease control team.

"With the strengthened operational workforce, NEA will be able to inspect 100 percent of the premises in dengue clusters within a week, as well as to step up preventive surveillance checks in non-cluster areas," it

said.

Dengue is endemic in Singapore, a rainy [tropical island](#), as well as neighbouring Southeast Asian countries.

The virus causes [high fever](#), headaches, itching and joint pains. At an advanced stage it can lead to haemorrhaging and death.

The NEA said the current epidemic was driven by "low population immunity" and warmer weather. The Aedes mosquito, which carries the virus and transmits the disease, thrives during the hot season.

Homeowners in the city-state—known for its fastidious sanitation—can be fined Sg\$200 (\$160) if [mosquito breeding](#) spots are found in their homes.

Repeat offenders can be fined up to Sg\$5,000 or jailed for up to three months, or both.

The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) warned in January that the disease had global "epidemic potential" after registering a 30-fold increase in the last 50 years to two million cases annually due to climate change and increased travel.

© 2013 AFP

Citation: Singapore fights back against worsening dengue outbreak (2013, June 12) retrieved 14 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-06-singapore-worsening-dengue-outbreak.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.