

# Dengue outbreak strikes 1,800 in Philippine province

July 6 2013

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Dengue fever has surged in the central Philippines, infecting more than 1,800 people and killing at least ten, a provincial official said Saturday.

The number of people struck down by the mosquito-borne disease in the central province of Iloilo this year is already 71 percent higher than the same period last year, provincial administrator Raul Baniyas told AFP.

He added dengue fatalities in the first half of 2013 were already equal to the total deaths for the whole of 2012.

The latest outbreak in the province, located around 400 kilometres (249 miles) south of Manila, has caused particular alarm because it began before the [rainy season](#)'s start in June, when [mosquitoes](#) are less plentiful, he said.

He added that the [outbreak](#) may be a sign of the changing behaviour of mosquitoes and a result of people storing water improperly.

Dengue is spread by mosquitoes that breed in stagnant water and usually bite people during daytime.

"But the behaviour of the mosquitoes has changed. They are no longer biting only during the day. Even at night, they are biting," he said.

Additionally many of the 1.6 million people living in the largely-rural province still stockpile water in their homes due to lack of proper

[plumbing](#), making it easier for the mosquitoes to breed.

Provincial [health workers](#) are now being deployed to the hardest-hit areas to inspect homes, searching for any water container where the mosquitoes might breed, Baniyas said.

Residents are also being advised to keep their water containers covered while victims are being given free treatment in government hospitals, he said.

Dengue [fever](#) is a recurring problem in the Philippines but while the number of incidents this year is slightly lower nationwide, it has been spiking in certain areas such as Iloilo.

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