

Sudan - Humanitarian Rumor Bulletin #2

► Special Edition on Dengue Fever

Types of Dengue

There are four types of Dengue viruses that can cause Dengue Fever, including DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and DENV-4. Once a person gets infected with one type of Dengue virus, they can develop lifelong immunity against that serotype. However, you can still become infected with other types of Dengue.

Internews and its Rooted in Trust partners have noticed **several high-risk rumors** being shared about Dengue Fever, on WhatsApp and Facebook, as well as among people in Al-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, which has been affected by the outbreak.

Preventative measures against Dengue Fever

Sudan's **Ministry of Health** recommends the following **preventative measures** for Dengue Fever, including, **applying mosquito control methods** such as rigorously cleaning water pots, cabinets, and the interior of air coolers with a brush or a steel wool scrubber to eliminate mosquito eggs. Also, **using mesh nets for doors and windows and sleeping under mosquito nets**, especially during the day as the mosquito is most active during the day. Moreover, it is mandatory **to isolate infected people inside mosquito nets**. We can also **wear light-colored, long-sleeved clothes and apply mosquito-repellent creams when available**.

Dengue Fever Situation Snapshot, November 2022

On November 30, 2022, Sudan's Ministry of Health announced on its [official Facebook page](#) a **Dengue Fever outbreak in 9 Sudanese states**, including *Kassala, Red Sea, North Kordofan, West Kordofan, South Kordofan, North Darfur, South Darfur, West Darfur, and White Nile States*. North Darfur state recorded the **highest infection rate** with (357) confirmed cases and (5) deaths, and North Kordofan state recorded the **highest number of suspected cases** with (1383) suspected cases, (62) confirmed cases, and (13) deaths.

The total number of Dengue Fever infections in Sudan reached (4538) suspected cases, (538) confirmed cases and (29) deaths.

What is Dengue Fever?

Dengue Fever is a viral infection transmitted through the "Aedes Aegypti" mosquito, which has black and white stripes on its body. Dengue Fever can be transmitted when an infected mosquito bites a human. In most cases, Dengue Fever symptoms are mild or asymptomatic. According to the [World Health Organization](#), symptoms can appear like a severe flu-like illness. Moreover, the incubation period for the disease is 4-10 days and symptoms usually last for 2 to 7 days. Dengue Fever symptoms include headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, nausea, vomiting, swollen glands, and rash. In some cases, Dengue Fever can cause severe symptoms such as severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, rapid breathing, bleeding gums or nose, liver enlargement, and blood in vomit or stool.



What's behind these rumors?

In Al-Obeid, North Kordofan, partners have noted a shortage in medical supplies, medicines, and hospital beds with an increase in Dengue Fever cases. Healthcare workers are also working around the clock to cater to Dengue Fever patients and other patients with different maladies. To help cover the rising medical needs, medical students have also volunteered in the response. With an overburdened health system, people may resort to readily available remedies as a quick fix for the disease, which can cause more harm than benefit. Although there have been some news updates and posts sharing trustworthy information about the disease, however, alarming posts and misinformation about Dengue Fever have been circulating more widely on social media platforms and during face-to-face discussions. With public hospitals over capacity and the few available healthcare options in private healthcare facilities being costly, people may resort to these affordable and tested remedies.

Rumor

01.

People should stop medications and burn their skin with hot steel

Woman – Al-Obeid – North Kordofan - WhatsApp

Rumor

02.

Some people are saying cutting your skin with a razor is better

Woman – Al-Obeid – North Kordofan - WhatsApp



Rumor

03.

Rubbing the body with vinegar to treat the fever

Woman – Location Unknown – WhatsApp

Rumor

04.

Its treatment is by malaria pills, along with drinking a lot of juices such as Tamarind and Hibiscus

Man – Location Unknown – Facebook





Facts

There is no treatment for Dengue Fever, and there is no evidence to suggest burning skin with steel heated under open fire, cutting the skin with a razor, rubbing the body with vinegar, or taking Malaria medication can cure Dengue Fever. According to [Mayo Clinic](#), if you have Dengue Fever you should avoid taking over-the-counter pain relievers such as Aspirin and Ibuprofen as they can increase your risk of having Dengue-related haemorrhage.

According to a study published by the [American National Center for Biotechnology Information](#), **Malaria medication (Chloroquine)** was given to patients with Dengue Fever-related symptoms. **The study showed that 63% of the patients who took Chloroquine reported a substantial decrease in pain and improved their ability to perform daily activities. However, Chloroquine did not affect the disease's duration, intensity, and days of the disease.**

Dr Mohamed Nour, Sudanese Public Health Consultant in Qatar clarifies, "Many cases of Dengue Fever are mild or moderate, and so they do not need to be admitted to the hospital. **Some might wrongly believe that herbal remedies like Hibiscus and Tamarind are the secret of their improvement, while it was only the natural life cycles of the mild/moderate form of the disease which takes days to weeks.**"

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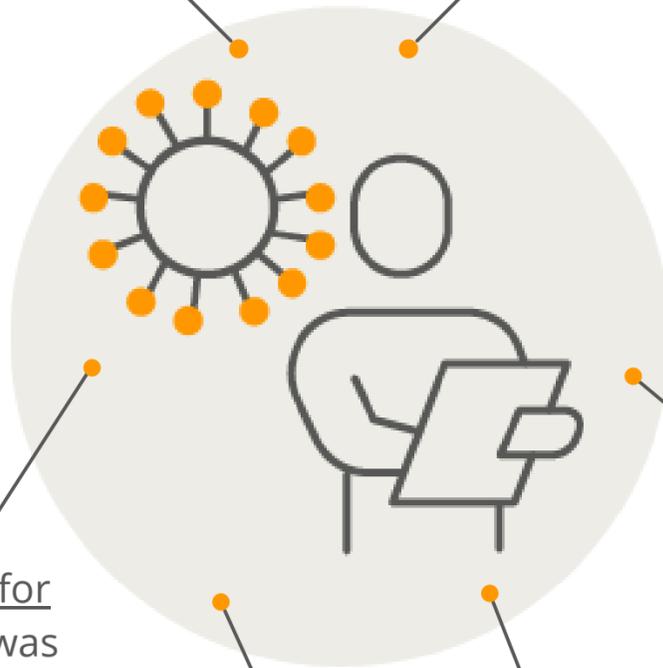
04.

04.

Burning your skin with steel or cutting yourself with a razor can worsen your condition as it can create infections, inflammation, third-degree burns, and could cause you to lose a lot of blood. For those with diabetes, this could lead to infections and longer-healing wounds. If you are experiencing any Dengue Fever symptoms it is best that you seek medical attention from the nearest healthcare facility.

A [study](#) pointed out that **daily reapplication of vinegar on the skin can lead to chemical burns and erosion of the skin.** As one of the symptoms of Dengue Fever is skin rash, applying vinegar can worsen your condition as your skin is already sensitive due to the rash.

Healthcare professionals advise that those infected with Dengue Fever stay hydrated, and drinking juices can increase our hydration. **However, it is worth noting that although Tamarind and Hibiscus have many health benefits, they do not cure Dengue Fever.**



Why is it important?



The rumors propose remedies that are not a cure for Dengue Fever which can be harmful to our health and bodies. Rumors promoting these types of treatments can seem like an attractive option for those infected by Dengue Fever, especially with an overstretched health system. If a person develops severe illness due to Dengue Fever, they may avoid going to the hospital and rely on recommendations from others to treat the disease, which could result in more harm.

As more people endure severe cases of Dengue Fever, coupled with limited trustworthy information about the disease and its preventative measures, unverified information and rumors will find more space. Over time, these types of rumors could also affect people's trust in the health system. As nine states have been affected by the disease so far, it is necessary to respond quickly to limit their spread, believability, and practice. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, rumors occupied a large space, while the circulation of trustworthy information about the virus was much slower or occupied less space with the expansiveness of rumors and misinformation. To avoid a similar situation, where rumors become more prevalent, it is necessary to counter misinformation by providing reliable, timely information.

Recommendations

- **Public health and humanitarian organizations should disseminate information about Dengue Fever**, including the transmission, preventative measures, and treatment options using the communities' preferred information channels and languages
- **Public health and humanitarian responders should work with** community health workers, community-based organizations, medical student associations, and local initiatives (i.e. Nafeer) to strengthen the information response by training and providing up-to-date resources and information about Dengue Fever
- **Humanitarian organizations and public health responders should provide timely media briefs** and updates to journalists in the affected states in their preferred communication channels and languages to ensure there is a continuous flow of information being shared with the public through various information channels

About Rooted in Trust

The Sudan Rooted in Trust project at Internews aims to respond to the COVID-19 "infodemic", including misinformation and rumors which affect access to basic services and assistance of vulnerable communities in Sudan. This periodic collection of rumors and misperceptions that circulate in Sudanese social media aims to provide humanitarian and public health actors suggestions for integrating community perspectives and concerns into their communication activities and strategy. These rumors have been gathered from social media and do not derive exclusively from popular groups with large numbers of followers, but aim to include voices of diverse, and vulnerable groups.

For more information on the project, please visit:

[Sudan Rooted in Trust](#)

**Want to give us feedback, get involved,
or share data? We love to chat!**

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