

Fewer cases, but stay vigilant as dengue peak season is here

🕒 PUBLISHED 7 HOURS AGO

We thank Mr V. Balu for his feedback ("Work together to stop dengue", last Friday) and hope he and his sons make a full recovery from dengue.

As of Aug 1, a total of 5,422 dengue cases have been reported in Singapore.

This is 54 per cent and 60 per cent lower than the figures reported for the same period last year and in 2013, respectively.

While it is good that we are seeing fewer cases this year, all stakeholders must remain vigilant and sustain efforts as we are now in the traditional dengue peak season.

The warmer months of June to October usually see a higher transmission of dengue due to accelerated breeding and maturation cycles for the *Aedes* mosquitoes and shorter incubation periods for the dengue virus.

A dengue cluster is formed when there are two or more cases with disease onset dates within 14 days and located within 150m of each other.

To stop dengue transmission, reducing the mosquito population is critical.

The National Environment Agency (NEA) steps up its inspections and source reduction operations in such clusters.

We also work with other stakeholders to check and eliminate potential breeding grounds in public areas and housing estates daily with spraying, fogging, oiling of drains and application of the *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (BTI) larvicide where applicable ("Non-toxic larvicides can aid in dengue fight" by Mr Johnny Wong; Tuesday).

As of June 30, the NEA has so far this year conducted more than 720,000 inspections and destroyed over 9,500 mosquito breeding habitats, of which the majority were found in homes.

We will continue to place emphasis on checking areas that have higher potential for dengue transmission, such as construction sites.

Mosquito breeding was detected in 7.8 per cent of the more than 6,000 inspections conducted at construction sites.

We will not hesitate to take errant premises owners to task.

From January to June, the NEA issued more than 500 notices to attend court and 60 Stop Work Orders.

Over 30 court prosecutions were also taken against contractors for repeat offences.

All residents and other stakeholders should check their premises daily for potential mosquito breeding habitats, and practise the "Do the Mozzie Wipeout" steps.

Those infected with dengue should protect themselves from mosquito bites by applying repellent regularly and those showing symptoms suggestive of dengue should see their GPs early to be diagnosed.

The latest updates on the dengue situation can be found on the Stop Dengue Now Facebook page, www.dengue.gov.sg or the myENV app.

Tony Teo
Director, Environmental Public Health Operations
National Environment Agency