

Here's What We Learnt At The Dengue Press Conference...

There have been so many conflicting messages being sent around on social media regarding dengue, so much so, we decided to attend the press conference at the Ministry of Health and Wellness yesterday so that we could be informed to set the record straight.



So here is the deal...The Ministry of Health and Wellness declared a Dengue outbreak on January 3rd, 2019. Below are some facts on Dengue and 5 things we learnt at the press conference.

DENGUE FACTS

-As of November 21st, 2019, there have been 13,523 notified cases of dengue in Jamaica.

-Of the 13,523 notified cases, 7,856 cases have been classified as suspected, presumed or confirmed. This is a large increase in those affected since 2018, where there were 2233 reported cases.

-Up until November 21st, there have been 63 suspected and confirmed dengue-related deaths. 22 were confirmed by PCR testing and 41 were classified as suspected based on clinical symptoms.

-Of the 63 suspected and confirmed dengue-related deaths, 17 cases died in 2018 while 46 died in 2019.

Age groups with the largest number of suspected and confirmed dengue-related deaths:

Age Group/Cohort	Deaths
Below 1	2
1-4	10
5-14	23
15-24	14
25-59	9
60 and over	5

So here is what we learnt the Ministry of Health and Wellness has done so far:

Ramped up its' Enhanced Vector Control Programme. This includes:

-Temporary increasing the number of Vector Control Workers to 1000.

-Providing J\$60M to NSWMA for Solid Waste Removal

-Expanding the Fogging Programme in high-risk communities

-Allocating approximately J\$320M to Municipal Corporation and MPs for Vector Control activities in Communities.

-Executing Public Education campaigns in all forms of media.

Increased Health Care initiatives. This includes:

- Increased Clinic Hours in some health centres from 3 pm to 8 pm
- Provided free treatment for children under 12 years at the UWI Hospital.
- .-Activated emergency operation centres at the MOH and in all parishes.
- Reviewed and updated all clinical protocols for Dengue and distributed them to private and public doctors.
- Hosted clinical sessions with private and public doctors for the treatment of Dengue cases.
- Received technical support from PAHO.

Cabinet has approved an enhanced intervention of \$1 Billion dollar expenditure over the next 3 months. This includes:

- Establishment of a National Dengue Coordination Committee.
- Approval of emergency procurement of 35 Vector Controlled Vehicles and mounted foggers.
- Planning and execution of a National Mosquito Eradication Day in conjunction with the National Labour Day Secretariat in The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports.
- Approval for the extension of the 1000 temporary Vector Control Vehicles Programme to at least 6 months after the outbreak has been declared.

Involvement of key Ministries, Agencies, and Departments called into action:

Ministry/Agency/Department	Action
Ministry of Local Government and Community Development	Mobilize local boards of Health at parish level.
Social Development Commission	Undertake community activation sessions for high-risk communities to include community meetings and town hall sessions.
National Solid Waste Management Authority	Expand removal of solid waste, especially bulky waste, from communities.
Ministry of Education, Youth & Information	Mobilize schools to undertake Dengue sensitization sessions
Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries	Mobilize RADA extension officers to engage and educate farmers on proper waste storage techniques, and for them to undertake breeding site eradication strategies.
National Works Agency	Undertake drain cleaning programmes and bushing activities to reduce mosquito breeding sites.

Communications Strategy to enhance awareness of Dengue:

- Remain transparent to the media with periodic updates to avoid panic within the public.
- Encourage doctors, medical personnel, and the public to treat every dengue case as serious as fatal signs may not clear be until it is too late.
- The formation of a clinical team between Cuba, Brazil, Jamaica, and three other Caribbean countries which have experienced severe cases of dengue. This team will have weekly discussions to develop a Dengue Case Management System.
- Weekly updates are available on the MOH website, available to everyone, especially for journalists who require data.
- Bustamante Children's Hospital was given additional resources to deal with the outbreak.

At the end of the day - the way we see it, is that the government has done a lot but the truth is they CANNOT realistically control all the mosquitos around town. We all need to accept individual responsibility as well and play our part as well.

ABOUT THE DESK AT 13 WEST

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