



How to avoid diseases spread by mosquitoes while in the Pacific

Getting bitten by mosquitoes is common in the Pacific and elsewhere in the tropics. **But some mosquitoes can carry serious diseases.**

There's been a rise in the number of people with dengue in Auckland, caught when visiting the Pacific.

Frequent travellers to the Pacific are at even greater risk. If you have had dengue previously, you can develop severe dengue (also called dengue haemorrhagic fever) if you are infected with a different strain of the dengue virus.

Although the most common time for mosquito bites is early morning and late afternoon, dengue-carrying mosquitoes bite all through the day.

Take precautions to avoid being bitten.

Indoors

Use screens on doors and windows.

Use insect sprays.

Use mosquito coils.

Use a mosquito net over your bed at night. New bed nets often have insecticide already on the net, but if not you can spray the net with insecticide.

Turn on air conditioning if you have it and close all windows and doors – this is very effective at keeping mosquitoes out of a room.

Outdoors

Wear an insect repellent cream or spray containing less than 35% diethyltoluamide (DEET).

High concentrations are no more effective and can be harmful. Products containing 20–25% picaridin or 30% lemon eucalyptus oil can also be used.

When using sunscreen, apply repellent over the top of sunscreen.

Wear light coloured protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants and hats. Clothing can be treated with repellent.

Use zip-up screens on tents.

Avoid places where mosquitoes are most active, such as swampy areas.