



Hawaii State Department of Health

Disease Investigation Branch

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Arboviral Infections

What are Arboviral infections?

Arboviral infections are a family of viral diseases that cause a variety of illnesses. Some cause infection of the brain and spinal cord, and the soft tissues surrounding them. Others cause illnesses with fever and rash, blood system disorders, hepatitis, and muscle pain. Most arboviral infections are reported during years of high mosquito activity, especially in the warm weather months. Arboviruses are generally not present in Hawaii.

How do you get it?

You can get arboviral infections from mosquitoes, ticks, and certain types of flies that feed on blood. Everyone is susceptible to arboviral infections, but young children and the elderly are diagnosed with them more frequently.

What are the symptoms?

Persons infected with a particular virus frequently have no symptoms at all or report only mild illness. Others will have only low fever and /or headache. However, in serious arboviral infections, the symptoms can include a severe headache with high fever, confusion, tremors, seizures, paralysis, coma, or even death.

When do symptoms start?

Depending on the specific type of arbovirus, the symptoms can last 2-15 days following the bite from an infected mosquito, tick, or blood-feeding fly.

What is the treatment for arboviral infections?

Other than trying to make the patient comfortable, there is no specific treatment for arboviral infections.

If you get an arboviral infection once, can you get it again?

No. Infection with an arbovirus gives protection against that specific virus, and perhaps against similar viruses.

Should an infected person be excluded from school or work?

No, there is no direct transmission of arboviruses from person to person. However, diagnosed individuals should avoid contact with mosquitoes and other biting arthropods.

How do you keep from getting it?

- Avoid exposure to mosquitos and flies during the hours of their highest activity, usually in the early morning and in the evening hours. Use mosquito nets over beds and use screens on windows and doors.
- Wear appropriate clothing (i.e., long-sleeved shirts and long pants) and use insect repellents when outdoors in mosquito, fly, or tick-infested areas.
- Institute mosquito and insect control programs by draining containers or by spraying areas where harmful insects may breed.

For more information:

CDC National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dvbd/index.html>