



Dengue in the Americas

Dengue has a complex epidemiological profile in the Americas. Four different strains of the virus circulate under conditions that are highly favorable for transmission. Dengue's presence in the region is reinforced by the persistence of social determinants including population growth, migration, unplanned and uncontrolled urbanization, pockets of poverty in cities, and lack of basic services such as for drinking water and waste disposal. Other challenges include a lack of social participation in prevention and control activities and limited resources for health promotion and communication. Between 1980 and 1990, the region saw a major deterioration in vector control, necessitating increased investments in entomology and integrated vector control targeting *Aedes aegypti*.

Key facts and problems

- Dengue is endemic throughout Latin America, except in Chile and Uruguay.
- An estimated 544 million people in Latin America are at risk of the disease.
- The highest number of cases in recent years was reported in 2010: 1.6 million cases, with 50,235 severe cases and 1,185 deaths.
- In 2011, illnesses due to dengue declined 39%, to 1.04 million, and deaths declined 40% to 719.

Key PAHO actions

PAHO is working to strengthen countries' capacities to respond to dengue outbreaks by:

- Establishing and supporting the International Dengue Task Force. The task force mobilizes experts from throughout the region to analyze the regional situation, pool efforts across countries, and implement the Integrated Strategy for Dengue Prevention and Control.
- Providing training and guidance in epidemiological surveillance, laboratory procedures, case management, mass communication and vector control.
- Supporting the development of integrated dengue management strategies. Currently, 22 countries have national strategies, and subregional strategies have been developed by the Andean and Southern Cone subregions, Central America and the English-speaking Caribbean.
- Developing and distributing new guidelines on dengue and providing training with a focus on patient care, to reduce deaths from dengue.
- Incorporating a future dengue vaccine into PAHO's Provac initiative, to facilitate the vaccine's introduction once it becomes available.
- Supporting the Dengue Laboratory Network of the Americas (RELDA), in conjunction with PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centers.

