

Ensuring safety from Dengue: Our responsibility

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Effective and sustainable prevention and control of dengue needs a multi-sectoral approach combating all the factors favouring vector breeding. Global evidence has however shown that, dengue prevention and control cannot be achieved/ sustained without community empowerment and ownership in those activities. Health authorities nor the government or other organizations alone can control and prevent dengue transmission. A major part of this can be achieved via active community participation. Community has an individual as well as collective responsibility in prevention and control of dengue. School children are the best changing agents to take valuable messages to the community. They can easily adopt themselves to have better behaviours and also can promote such changes in adults as well. When children are changed to have positive behaviors those will sustain for their life which will give long term good impact to the community.

Responsibility of the school in case of a sick child

When a child presents with fever, headache and vomiting in the school sick room, it is the doctor's duty to treat the child without uncertainty.

During this season when anyone presents with fever, dengue has to be suspected as the first disease in differential diagnosis. Many patients (90%) infected with dengue virus remain asymptomatic while others will develop a febrile illness after about 6 days from the infection (incubation period).

Dengue has to be suspected in a child with acute onset of high fever accompanied with following features.

- Headache and retro-orbital pain
- Muscle pain/ joint pain
- Diffuse, reddish rash
- Nausea and vomiting
- Bleeding manifestations

Living in an endemic area, as well as presence of patients with dengue fever in that area increase the likelihood of diagnosing dengue. It is difficult to differentiate dengue fever from dengue haemorrhagic fever during the first few days of the febrile phase. Therefore close monitoring of the patient is highly important in this period.

The medical officer can manage the initial stage at the sick room.

- Take a good history
- Measure the temperature
- Look for any signs of bleeding manifestations
- Give Paracetamol in adequate dosage according to the body weight
- Ensure adequate oral fluid intake
- Inform parents

If the child can be managed at home without admitting to a hospital parents should be advised regarding home-based care by the school medical officer.

- Provide adequate physical rest. Until the child is completely cured school, classes, sports or other trips should be avoided and ensure rest at home.
- Fever should be controlled only with adequate doses of paracetamol.
- Pain killers like ibuprofen, diclofenac sodium, mefenamic acid and steroids like prednisolone, dexamethasone should be avoided. They may induce severe bleeding.
- Fever should be controlled with tepid sponging using luke warm water.
- Adequate clear fluids like jeevani, king coconut water, fruit juices,

kanji or soup should be used instead of plain water.

- Red and brown coloured drinks should be avoided.
- Must advice to do a full blood count after the second day of fever and the report shown to a doctor.
- Following danger signs should be informed to the parents and advised to seek medical treatment immediately.
- Deterioration of the condition with the settling of fever
- Inability to eat/ drink

- Severe abdominal pain/ vomiting
- Bleeding manifestations: gum bleeding/ nasal bleeding/ coffee ground vomiting/ dark stools etc.
- Reduced urine output/ not passing urine for more than 6 hours
- Child should be kept under a mosquito net to prevent mosquito bites as

the child can transmit the infection during this period.

Responsibility of the school authority

When there are several fever cases in the school, the school medical authorities should be informed to take relevant actions. Dengue control and prevention actions should be conducted with the participation of all teachers and students. It is mainly the

environmental management that needs to be focused on.

- A school dengue control committee should be established and a responsible person should be allocated to carry out the dengue control and preventive activities
- School should engage in cleaning their premises for an hour in a selected day every week to remove mosquito breeding sites
- The dengue control committee should daily inspect the premises



for mosquito breeding sites and provide a report to the principal weekly

Responsibility of students

Prevention and control of dengue is not only a responsibility of teachers but also of the parents. It is a collective responsibility of all citizens. Students play an important role in keeping their environment clean.

- Waste segregation and disposal
- Most of the school premises

contain different coloured dustbins. Therefore student should make it a habit to throw away garbage to the correct container.

- No polythene policy

It is very important to reduce the use of polythene which in turn reduces the disposal to the environment. Reusable bags can be used. Students should be advised to bring food in a reusable container without using lunch sheets which are environmental hazards.

Furthermore whatever the container/ bottle they bring these should be taken back home without disposing at school. These habits will be very advantageous in their adult lives as well.

- Environmental cleanliness
- Keeping the environment clean will make sure that it is free of mosquito breeding sites. At the same time clean

environment at school will make students realize its importance and will in turn make them change their home environment as well.

- Self-protection

All school children are at risk of getting mosquito bites during school hours as the mosquitos are very active during this period. Therefore, students can get themselves protected from mosquito bites wearing protective clothes covering their extremities and also by using repellents.

- Home environment

It
is

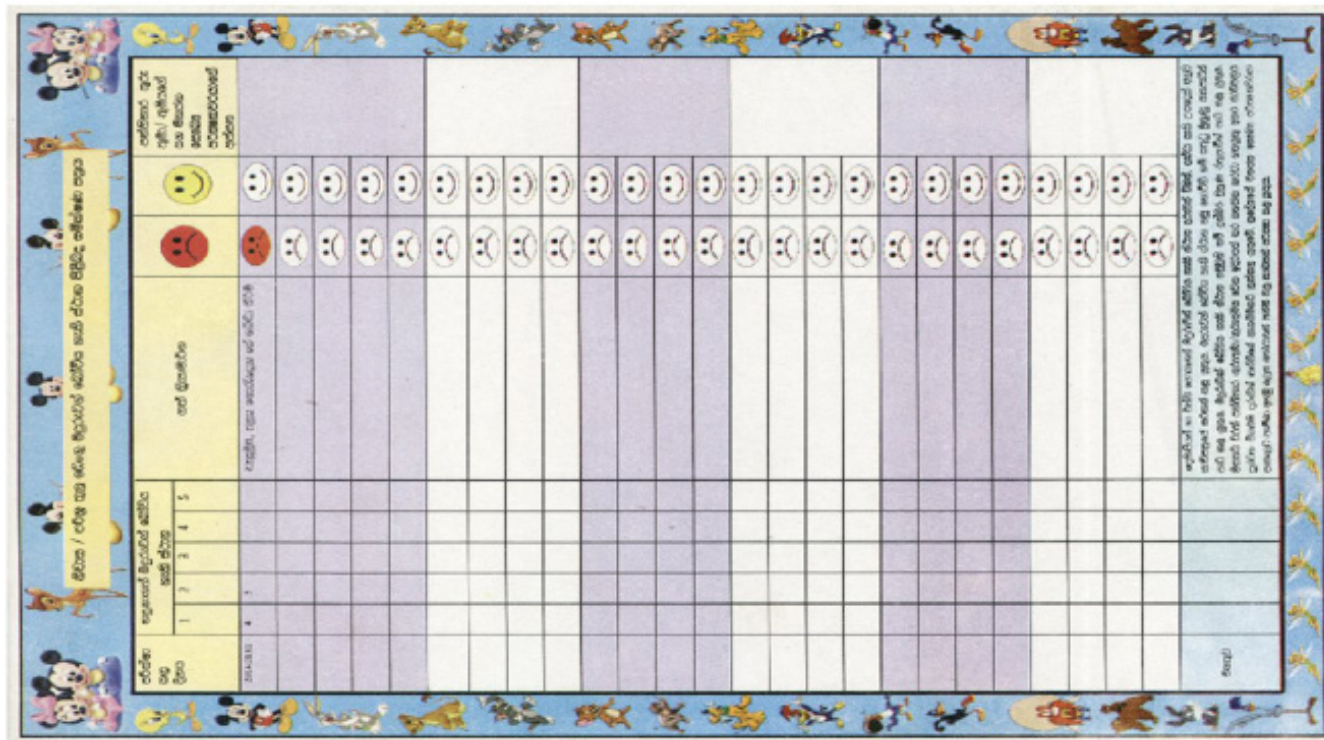


Fig 2 : Home Inspection Card



not only the school environment that need to be kept clean. Home environment should be kept clean and safe to prevent mosquito breeding. If there are possible breeding sites at home parents can be made aware by students to remove them.

Responsibility of parents

- Seek medical advice on time
When a child is having fever, action must be taken immediately to get medical advice and also need to adhere to the given advice. A sharp eye needs to be kept on the child to identify any danger signs and act immediately.

- Educate students by doctors
There will be a lot of old boys/ girls now working as doctors. They can be utilized to give medical advice to the students, teachers and parents on a regular basis. Continuous awareness campaigns are important to prevent and control dengue. In case of several fever patients present in the school immediate control and preventive actions can be taken by the doctors with the help of other relevant authorities.

- Clean the school premises
Regular cleaning programmes can

be arranged in schools with the help of parents, old boys/ girls and make the environment free from dengue breeding sites.

- Updating the school card (Fig. 1)
The National Dengue Control Unit introduced a school card to be filled by students to inspect both schools and houses in 2015.
- Updating the home inspection card (Fig. 2)

The National Dengue Control Unit has introduced a new home inspection card to be kept at home. There is a list of possible mosquito breeding sites given in the card and also the actions needed to be taken in case of identifying such a site.

The card should be kept in a secure place and inspect the home and the surrounding premises weekly and fill it up continuously for a year. When a healthcare worker visits the house they will check the card and take necessary actions.

Parents can give the responsibility to their children and make them do it weekly under supervision. It will make sure the environment is clean and also it will make them adopt a behaviour which will last lifelong.

All in all if all students, teachers/ school authorities and parents can

get together as a team, it is very easy to prevent and control dengue in the future.

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