

FACT SHEET



Ross River Virus

Cases of Ross River Virus are reported on occasions across the state. Mosquitoes carry the virus to humans where symptoms develop. To reduce the likelihood of becoming infected, take the following precautions.

Background

Ross River virus can cause joint inflammation, muscle ache, fatigue and a rash often develops. It is spread by mosquitoes and symptoms may develop between 3 and 21 days after exposure. All people recover but symptoms may linger for a year or more.

Symptoms

- Joint pain, often in wrists, knees, ankles, fingers & toes
- Rash on the body and limbs can appear 1-10 days after the onset of joint pain and can last up to 10 days
- Enlargement of lymph nodes, particularly in groin or armpit
- 'Pins and needles' and tenderness on the soles of feet and palms of hands
- Extreme lethargy

Distribution

In Tasmania the coastal regions extending from the North (including the islands of eastern Bass Strait), down the East to the South Eastern corner, all have areas suited to the breeding of mosquitoes that can transmit Ross River virus. Coastal salt marshes provide ideal mosquito breeding sites.



Photo: Wikipedia

Prevention

- Avoid known mosquito infested areas, particularly at dawn and dusk.
- Wear loose fitting, light coloured clothing that covers as much of your body as possible. Mosquitoes can bite through tight fitting clothing.
- Use insect repellents containing DEET on exposed areas.
- Fit flyscreens properly to windows and external doors.
- Reduce the number of potential mosquito breeding habitats by ensuring no stagnant water is present. Containers holding water should be emptied and washed regularly.

Diagnosis and where to get help

Contact your doctor. Blood tests can confirm if a person has Ross River Virus, but there is no specific treatment. Paracetamol may relieve pain and your doctor may prescribe medication to reduce joint inflammation.