

**Source:** The Straits Times, Page A1 & A2  
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# Death toll hits 29 in S'pore's worst dengue outbreak

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At least one more person has died from dengue this year, bringing the total to 29 deaths by end-September – more than the 28 people who have died from Covid-19 in Singapore.

When asked if there have been more dengue deaths since then, the Ministry of Health (MOH) declined to say, adding that death numbers are reported quarterly.

Of the 29 deaths, seven people died in the first quarter of the year, nine in the second quarter and 13 from July to September.

They were aged between 25 and 92, according to the National Environment Agency's (NEA) quarterly Dengue Surveillance Data released this month.

The outbreak this year is the worst dengue epidemic ever experienced in Singapore, with more people infected and dead from the mosquito-borne disease than ever before.

About 34,000 people have been diagnosed with dengue so far, or more than 50 per cent higher than the total seen in any previous year.

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**6,800 BREEDING SPOTS DETECTED** continued on A2

**Source:** The Straits Times, Page A1 & A2  
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# 6,800 breeding spots detected from July to Sept

CASES STILL HIGH

**The weekly number of dengue cases continues to remain high, at about two times more than the number of cases seen in the corresponding period averaged over the last three years. The adult *Aedes aegypti* mosquito population detected from the NEA's Gravitrap surveillance system remains high in some areas of Singapore.**



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

**FROM A1**

But in reality, over 100,000 more would have been infected as only about a fifth of people infected see a doctor and are diagnosed, said Associate Professor Hsu Li Yang, programme leader for infectious diseases at the National University of Singapore's Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

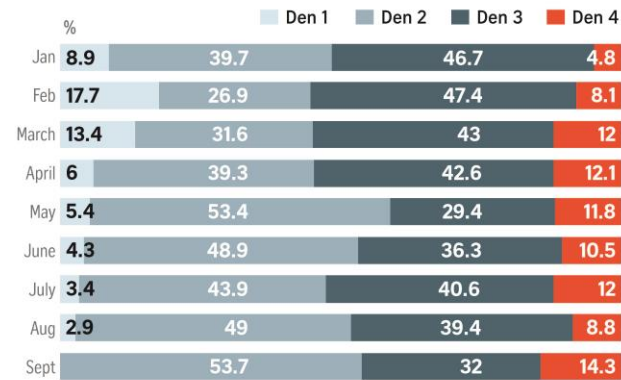
But those not diagnosed can still pass the disease on to others if bitten by a mosquito while infected.

The highest number ever infected in a year previously was in 2013, when 22,170 people were diagnosed with the disease.

The number of weekly infections peaked in July this year with 1,792 people diagnosed in just one week – far more than the monthly total in most years. Until this year, the largest number of weekly infections was 891 cases in 2014.

There were also at least five super clusters with more than 300 people infected in each location – something that has happened only once before in 2014, and at

## Infections caused by different dengue serotypes this year



NOTE: Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding up

Source: DENGUE SURVEILLANCE DATA, JULY-SEPT 2020 STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

only one location.

Prior to this, the largest number of people who died of dengue in a year was 25, in 2005. This year has not ended, and already 29 people have died.

Symptoms of dengue include nausea, vomiting, a red rash, muscle and joint ache as well as pain behind the eyes. The more serious dengue haemorrhagic fever causes bleeding internally and externally.

About one in five people diagnosed with dengue here usually ends up in hospital.

Despite repeated warnings by the NEA that Singapore is facing its biggest ever dengue threat, thousands of cases of mosquito breeding in homes and public areas continue to be uncovered by its officers.

The NEA detected 6,800 breeding spots between July and September, with domestic containers the

most common in homes, and discarded receptacles in public areas.

With the end of the usual peak dengue season, which spans the hot and wet months of May to October, the number of weekly infections will hopefully taper off.

The number of diagnosed cases has been declining over the past four weeks, and stood at 355 cases last week.

Another bright spot is the fall in the number of people infected by Den-3.

People infected by dengue usually become immune to the particular strain they caught – more commonly Den-1 and Den-2 here.

Fewer people have immunity against Den-3 and Den-4.

In January, Den-3 accounted for 47 per cent of infections. This fell to 32 per cent in September. The NEA said this is the first Den-3 outbreak here in three decades.

Although the number of infections is going down, the NEA warned on its website: "The weekly number of dengue cases continues to remain high, at about two times more than the number of cases seen in the corresponding period averaged over the last three years."

"The adult *Aedes aegypti* mosquito population detected from the NEA's Gravitrap surveillance system remains high in some areas of Singapore."

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