

Dengue Spreads in US With Virginia's First Local-Exposure Case

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Virginia has reported its first case of dengue in a person who hadn't recently traveled outside the state, a sign that the mosquito-borne disease is expanding its reach in the US.

The state's health department said Tuesday the patient was likely [infected](#) by a local mosquito that had previously bitten someone who contracted dengue while traveling abroad. Virginia officials said that the risk to the public remains low.

This follows recent cases in Florida's [Miami-Dade](#) and [Hillsborough](#) counties that were also locally acquired, adding to evidence that the virus, once mostly found in tropical countries, is expanding into cooler climates.

"The mosquitoes that carry these viruses are being transported through travel, airplanes and ships into the US, and the climate in the US has become more amenable for their maintenance," said James Earnest, an assistant professor at the University of Central Florida who researches immune responses to dengue.

Regions like southern Florida, Texas, Louisiana and southern California are most at risk for continued dengue spread as warmer winters allow mosquitoes to survive, he added.

Dengue is transmitted by the same mosquitoes that spread Zika and chikungunya, and can cause fever, body aches, eye pain, nausea and rash, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This year, the CDC has identified [more than 1,400](#) total in the US, almost all associated with travel.

Climate change is significantly increasing dengue fever worldwide, according to a [study](#) published last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Researchers project dengue cases could rise by as much as 76% across parts of Asia and the Americas by 2050.

"If you look in Central America and the Caribbean, there have been large outbreaks, especially in 2024 and 2025," Earnest said. "We're starting to see some of those cases move into the United States."

Dengue symptoms typically appear three to seven days after an infected mosquito bite, Earnest said, adding that many people never know they were infected because the illness often resembles other viral infections. Most people [recover](#) after about a week.

The only dengue vaccine approved in the US, Sanofi SA's [Dengvaxia](#), is no longer being produced after its manufacturer discontinued it last year, citing low demand.

Preventing mosquito bites is the best way to [protect](#) against dengue, the CDC says. It recommends using insect repellent and wearing loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and pants.