

NSW Arbovirus Update

Information for NSW Pharmacists

Key Points for Pharmacists:

1. There is an increased risk of Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus infections due to the recent flooding and heavy rain in inland NSW
2. Patients may present with symptoms of fever, rash and arthralgia
3. Reinforce mosquito prevention messages to patients.

Background

- Routine mosquito surveillance has detected a marked increase in total numbers of mosquitoes in inland areas following recent flood events and heavy rains
- Detections of Ross River virus (RRV) and Barmah Forest virus (BFV) in mosquitoes has already occurred, which is earlier than any previous arboviral season. These viruses have been detected in mosquitoes in the Riverina and Central West regions of NSW.
- There is therefore a heightened risk of RRV and BFV infections in the next few months.
- Pharmacists are encouraged to reinforce mosquito-bite prevention messages among their patients and to be alert for patients presenting with possible arbovirus infections, especially if they have visited rural parts of NSW 7 to 10 days before the onset of symptoms.
- RRV and BFV cannot be passed directly from person to person

Clinical features

- Symptomatic RRV and BFV infections typically include a rash (including on the palms), polyarthritis/arthralgia, myalgia, lethargy and low-grade fever that persists for 7 to 10 days.
- Symptoms such as arthralgia, myalgia and lethargy may occasionally persist for months.

Testing and treatment advice

- If testing is required this is typically carried out serologically for both RRV and BFV.
- Treatment is symptomatic: antipyretics or anti-inflammatory agents may be useful

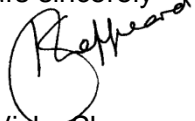
Prevention advice

- To minimise the risk of mosquito bites, patients should be advised to:
 - Cover-up with a loose-fitting long sleeved shirt and long pants when outside
 - Apply mosquito repellent containing DEET or Picaridin to exposed skin
 - Take special care during peak mosquito biting hours, especially around dawn and dusk
 - Remove potential mosquito breeding sites from around the home and screen windows and doors
 - Take extra precautions when travelling or camping in areas with a higher risk of mosquito-borne diseases.

Further information from NSW Health:

- For information on reducing the risk of mosquito bites see the *Mosquitoes are a Health Hazard* fact sheet: www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/mosquito.aspx
- RRV fact sheet: www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/ross-river-fever.aspx
- BFV fact sheet
www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Barmah_Forest_virus_infection.aspx
- NSW arbovirus/mosquito surveillance reports:
www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/pests/vector/Pages/resources.aspx

Yours sincerely .



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