

# Hindustan Times

## Go for multiple tests to confirm ailment

**Jaya Shroff Bhalla**  
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DENGUE FEVER is marked by the onset of sudden high fever above 103 degrees over two days. It is accompanied with severe headache and pain behind the eyes, muscles and joints.

It is like any other viral attack, which starts with fever.

"It is however not necessary that the first serological test report indicates positive case of dengue. Hence if high fever persists it is important that one undergoes a second test soon," said Dr Bir Singh, professor in the department of community medicine at the All India Institute for Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

"When fever refuses to subside despite paracetamols like crocin or combiflam and is also accompanied by pain in the back and behind the eyes, you should know it is time to consult a doctor," he added.

Doctors say if the high fever continues for four to five days (103 - 105 degrees) with a added symptoms like pain behind the eyes which worsens with eye movement, body aches, joint pains or nausea and vomiting and bleeding, the condition could be severe — sometimes leading to dengue haemorrhagic fever or dengue shock syndrome.

Dengue Haemorrhagic fever (DHF) is a more severe form, in which bleeding and sometimes shock occurs — leading to death.

The dengue virus causes the blood vessels to swell and leak, creating small purple colored spots on the skin, called petechiae. The skin may appear bruised in areas where the bleeding is worse.

Bleeding into the stomach causes severe abdominal pains and vomiting of a black, grainy substance that looks like coffee grounds. This severe bleeding occurs when the blood runs out of clotting factors.

"Almost three to five per cent of the critically ill dengue patients die in extreme conditions, where there is a serious viral attack. In dengue shock syndrome the blood vessels become leaky causing the blood pressure levels to fall down thereby leading to multi-organ failure causing death," said Dr Sandeep Budhiraja, consultant, internal medicine, Max Hospital.

"In most cases, however, there is no reason to panic if dengue is treated in time," he added.

Dr Upendra Kaul, executive director cardiology, Escorts Hospital and Research Centre, added a note of caution to patients with underlying heart diseases.

"Older patients or patients with a history of heart diseases can become very sick if they develop these complications, which are usually well tolerated by patients with normal hearts."

Sometimes temporary aggressive treatment like temporary pacemaker helps in resuscitating these patients.

jaya.shroff@hindustantimes.com



**HEALTH UPDATE**

### DENGUE HAEMORRHAGIC FEVER AND SHOCK

Symptoms similar to dengue fever plus any one of the following:

- Severe and continuous pain in abdomen
- Bleeding from the nose, mouth and gums or skin bruising
- Frequent vomiting with or without blood
- Black stools, like coal tar
- Excessive thirst (dry mouth)
- Pale, cold skin
- Restlessness or sleepiness

### COMPARATIVE DATA OF CAPITAL

	2006	2007	2008
Dengue Cases	3,366	548	67
Dengue Deaths	65	1	—