



# Ross River virus

## What is Ross River virus infection?

Ross River virus infection is caused by Ross River virus that is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes.

## What are the symptoms of Ross River virus infection?

Symptoms of Ross River virus infection may include:

- fever
- chills
- headache
- muscles and joint pains, stiffness or swelling (particularly in the morning)
- rash on the body, arms or legs.
- tired or weakness

If you get these symptoms, contact a doctor right away, or Health Direct on 1800 022 222 or in an emergency call Triple Zero (000) or visit your nearest emergency department.

Many people with Ross River virus infection do not have symptoms. When symptoms occur, they usually develop about 7-10 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Most people will make a full recovery after a few weeks. Others may have symptoms such as joint pain and tiredness for many months.

## How is the Ross River virus spread?

It is spread when a mosquito bites an infected animal or human and then this mosquito bites a human. The virus is not spread directly from person to person.

## Who has a higher chance of getting Ross River virus infection?

Those who are more likely to get Ross River virus infection are:

- people who live or work in warm, humid climates near bodies of water
- people who have visited or live in or around wetlands or rivers
- people who have recently been bitten by mosquitoes in affected areas

- people who work or do outside activities (e.g., camping, fishing, hiking, gardening) in coastal and inland areas.

## **How do I avoid the Ross River virus infection?**

There is currently no vaccine against Ross River virus. The best way to avoid the virus is to not get bitten by mosquitoes. Protect yourself:

- use insect repellent. The best mosquito repellents have diethyltoluamide (DEET), picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus
- wear long, loose fitting and light-coloured clothing and covered shoes when outside
- do not spend lots of time outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active
- cover all windows, doors, vents, and other entrances with insect screens
- remove any containers that hold water where mosquitoes may breed
- use insecticide sprays, vapour dispensing units (inside), and mosquito coils (outdoors) to clear rooms and repel mosquitoes from an area
- use mosquito nets or screens

## **How do you know if you have Ross River virus infection?**

If you have the symptoms listed above, a doctor may run a blood test to find if there are antibodies to Ross River virus. Blood samples are taken while the person is unwell and then again two weeks later. This will check to see if there has been a change in the antibody levels, indicating recent infection.

## **How is Ross River virus infection treated?**

There is no specific treatment available for Ross River virus infection. Your doctor will be able to advise you on treating the symptoms.

## **What is the public health response?**

Laboratories are required to notify cases of Ross River virus infection on diagnosis. Where cases occur in unexpected locations, the public health unit may investigate further.

**For further information please call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055.**

**Visit: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/mosquitoes](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mosquitoes)**