

Dengue Fever Alert in Cuba: The Largest Number of Outbreaks in the Last Fifteen Years

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MIAMI, United States. – The Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP, by its Spanish acronym) announced Tuesday that the country is on dengue fever alert, and that the number of outbreaks that has been registered for 2022 is the largest in 15 years.

According to a press note published by the state's Agencia Cubana de Noticias (ACN, by its Spanish acronym), this alert has been issued especially for four provinces: Havana, Camagüey, Las Tunas and Holguín.

Dr. Madelaine Rivera Sánchez, national director of Cuba's Vector Watch and Control (Vigilancia y Lucha Antivectorial), the outbreaks of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito are distributed as follows: Havana (16.5%); Holguín (13.5%); Santiago de Cuba (11.3%); and Camagüey (11.8%). Seventeen municipalities account for 60.8% of outbreaks in the country.

Although the government has not revealed real numbers regarding contagion or people who are sick with the disease, outbreaks in 2022 increased 21.7% over the

same period in 2021.

Cuban authorities hold the population responsible for finding solutions to the problem, and they are calling for strict vigilance of water deposits where the mosquito breeds. According to Rivera Sánchez, it is precisely in those water containers that 83% of the outbreaks are located.

She also explained that 90% of the vector control inspectors' task had been completed, which allows for more residential facilities to be reached. However, she made it clear that, contrary to fumigation practices in previous years, today, only homes where there is a person with a fever or who tested positive for dengue are being fumigated.

In addition to the alert that pertains to these four provinces, there is fear that another 71 municipalities may be at risk. According to Rivera Sánchez, the government is also reinforcing focal treatment with anti-vector larvicide and the destruction of water deposits.

However, in spite of the alert, this official stated that “due to the fuel shortages in the country, there will not be full-scale fumigation as called for in the traditional protocol, but we will continue to work on detecting possible outbreaks.”

Rivera Sánchez indicated that the situation “is complex”, but she assures that one cannot talk of epidemic in Cuba and that “temporary groups in the provinces are constantly analyzing the disease's situation and the state of mosquito infestation.”

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