

Brazil Has Already Reported 3,000 Dengue Cases This Year

Contributed by Michèle Canes
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Brazil's Ministry of Health reports that as the dengue mosquito season begins - it goes from January to May - it is intensifying its combat against the insect.

Giovanni Coelho, who coordinates the anti-dengue program at the Ministry, says an educational campaign to prevent the disease is underway, as well as special assistance in locations where the disease has appeared.

At the same time, health agents continue to visit residences and businesses to destroy mosquito focal points.

Coelho reports that during the first 15 days of January, a total of almost 3,000 cases of dengue were reported nationwide. That is down 50% from the same period last year.

In July 2005, a bulletin from Brazil's Ministry of Health reported that the number of cases of dengue had risen in 19 states. From January to May, there was a nationwide average rise of 30% in dengue cases.

The document informed that the increase had been uneven. In the Southern region, dengue cases, at the time, were up over 180%, while in the Southeastern region the number of cases had actually fallen 26.6%.

The head of the secretariat of Health Vigilance, Jarbas Barbosa, said that the bulletin was a warning.

"Dengue is not something you eliminate by sending in health agents and spraying the area. Because the next day somebody can toss an empty yogurt cup in the yard or leave a bucket of water out in the open and you have new breeding grounds for the dengue mosquito.

"We need constant, consistent public participation. Everybody has to get involved. That is the only way we can avoid an epidemic," he said.

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