

## How would I know if I had Ross river Virus?

A variety of blood tests are used to demonstrate the presence of specific antibodies to Ross River Virus. It takes a couple of weeks before these antibodies appear in the blood. If symptoms are persisting longer than 6 months it is very important to see your doctor as some other medical conditions can be very similar to RRV.

## How long does the illness last?

- Many people will recover completely within a few weeks. Others have symptoms lasting more than three months and in rare cases for more than a year.
- The symptoms can recur on and off over this period of time but usually become less severe each time.
- A full recovery can be expected.

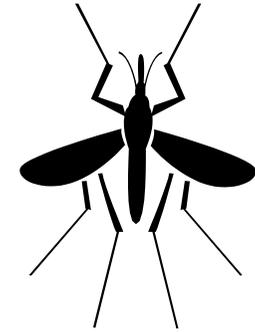
## What treatment is available?

- There is no specific treatment for Ross River virus infection.
- Your doctor will be able to advise you on medications that will help ease the discomfort of the symptoms.
- Plenty of rest, along with moderate exercise and healthy eating, may help in your recovery.



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## Ross River Virus Fact Sheet

Ross River virus is a germ that infects people, particularly in rural areas, sometimes causing a flu-like illness with joint pains.

# Ross River Virus Fact

## How is it Prevented

- Avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, especially in the summer and autumn months when infections are more common.
- Various species of mosquitoes bite at different times. Avoid being outside in the late afternoon and dusk. Mosquitoes are usually most active up to one to three hours after sunset and again around dawn.
- When outside wear loose fitting, light coloured clothing that covers your arms and legs, and use an insect repellent that contains the chemical diethyl toluamide (DEET) or picardin.
- Fit fly screens to all windows, doors and chimneys and keep them in good repair.
- Ensure open containers of water are removed from around the home to prevent mosquitoes breeding. Cover the openings to water tanks with fine steel mesh to prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs in the tank.
- When camping take precautions such as using flyscreens on caravans and tents and by sleeping under mosquito proof nets. Take particular care while fishing, ensuring that you follow personal precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

## What symptoms can Ross river

### Virus cause

Symptoms when present include fever, headache, aches and pains in the muscles and joints, and in about 50% of people a rash. In the majority of cases, symptoms disappear within 6 weeks. Ten percent of people can feel depressed and have fatigue affecting their activities of daily living for up to 6 months.

- (a) It is important to note that 100% of affected people recover completely in due course with no residual effects.
- (b) Those affected by infection gain life-long immunity against future infection.
- (c) Many people infected with the virus, particularly children, have no symptoms but go on to achieve life-long immunity. Most of the cases notified in Tasmania have been in people ages over 40.

## How long does it take for Ross river Virus to appear?

The incubation period ranges from 3-11 days (often 7-9 days).

## Can an affected person infect others?

Direct person-to-person spread vary rarely occurs as explained above.

## How is it Spread?

The infection is spread by infected mosquitoes. In large outbreaks, mosquitoes may also spread the virus from infected people to other people. However, large outbreaks usually involve hundreds of cases occurring in a short period of time. This situation has not arisen in Tasmanian

Only a few species of mosquitoes are capable of transmitting RRV in Tasmania. The risk of contracting RRV depends on various factors such as,

- Mosquito activity, which in turn is related to heavy rain and high tides that provide habitat areas for mosquito breeding. Other climatic factors including temperature, humidity and wind strength and/or direction are also important factors, and
- Proximity to mosquito species that can transmit RRV and wildlife that carry RRV.