



Press release

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Health Council advises against dengue vaccination on the Dutch Caribbean islands for the time being

The Health Council of the Netherlands has advised the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport against introducing a dengue vaccination programme for residents of the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at this time, citing uncertainties about the efficacy and safety of the vaccine.

Every year, an estimated 96 million people worldwide contract dengue, also known as breakbone fever. Dengue often presents asymptotically or with mild symptoms. However, it can also cause severe symptoms, including bleeding and organ damage. The virus is transmitted by the yellow fever mosquito and, to a lesser extent, by the tiger mosquito. There are no reports of dengue caused by these mosquitoes in the European Netherlands, but they are known to transmit the virus in the Dutch Caribbean islands. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has asked the Health Council of the Netherlands for advice on a dengue vaccination programme for residents of the BES (Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba) and CAS (Curaçao, Aruba and St Maarten) islands.

The Health Council advises against programmatic dengue vaccination, as it is unclear whether the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks. It is uncertain whether the vaccine is effective against all types of dengue virus, and there are concerns about its safety, particularly in dengue-naïve individuals. The Health Council advises closely monitoring the number of dengue infections among children and adults.

New data on these points may prompt a revised recommendation. The same applies to new data on the efficacy, effectiveness and safety, particularly regarding the potential risk of serious dengue in dengue-naïve people who contract dengue after vaccination. Registration of another dengue vaccine may also prompt a revised recommendation.

The publication Vaccination against dengue in the Dutch Caribbean islands (no. 2026/03), is available online at www.healthcouncil.nl.

For further information please contact Silvia Viergever, tel. +31 6 254 47 658, e-mail: pers@gr.nl.