

Japanese  
encephalitis  
is found  
throughout  
Australasia  
and Asia.



**Ask your doctor about  
ways to help protect  
yourself both at home  
and when travelling.**

**In addition to vaccination, avoiding mosquito bites is an important way to further protect yourself against JE.**

**To prevent mosquito bites, take these steps:**

- Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts, long trousers and enclosed shoes. Mosquitoes can bite through tight clothing.
- Apply mosquito repellent containing picaridin, DEET or oil of lemon eucalyptus, evenly to all areas of exposed skin. Natural or homemade repellents provide limited protection. Read the instructions to find out how often you should reapply repellent. Always apply sunscreen first and then apply repellent.
- Take special care during peak mosquito biting hours. Some species of mosquitoes will bite all throughout the day.
- Remove stagnant water around the home as they can become mosquito breeding sites.
- Use mosquito nets, and screen windows and doors.
- Take extra precautions when travelling in areas with a higher risk of mosquito-borne diseases.



**Japanese encephalitis (JE) is a mosquito-borne viral disease that infects the brain. Japanese encephalitis can be very serious. It can leave you with brain damage or cause death.**

**JE is found throughout Australia, Asia and parts of the Western Pacific. It is spread mainly in rural agricultural areas, especially those with rice cultivation, flood irrigation and around pigs or waterbirds – although in some areas of Asia these are close to urban centres.**

In temperate areas of Asia, the chance of catching JE is seasonal, and usually peaks in summer and autumn. In the subtropics and tropics, it can vary with monsoon rains and irrigation practices and high-risk seasons may be prolonged or even occur year-round.

The virus is spread through bites of certain species of mosquitoes after they have become infected from feeding on infected waterbirds or pigs.



**JE is the main cause of viral encephalitis in many countries of Asia with an estimated 100,000 clinical cases every year<sup>1</sup>**



**In Australia these mosquitoes are usually active:**

- from mid-spring to late autumn in south-eastern Australia
- all year in northern Australia.

The risks vary depending on location, season, weather and other local factors.

An Australian outbreak occurred between January 2021 and February 2023, when 45 people in mainland Australia were diagnosed with JE. During this outbreak, 7 people died. Cases were found as far south as Victoria.

**Cases have been reported each year since.**

## **JE is a rare but serious illness.**

Most people infected with the JE virus don't have any symptoms or just mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of infected people develop inflammation of the brain known as encephalitis. A person with encephalitis can experience fever, neck stiffness, seizures or coma.

### **Unfortunately there is no specific treatment for JE**

As many as 1 in 3 people who develop encephalitis die from the disease. Of those who survive, up to half suffer permanent cognitive, behavioural or neurological complications.

### **Routine vaccination against JE is recommended for:**

- laboratory workers who may be exposed to the virus
- travellers spending 1 month or more in endemic areas during the JE virus transmission season
- people who live or work on the outer islands of the Torres Strait.

In Australia, vaccine may be funded for specific priority groups, targeted to those most at risk such as:

- work with or live close to pigs and waterbirds
- work with mosquitoes, such as environmental health officers or entomologists
- live or work in identified JE high risk local government areas (state specific).

**Check with your immuniser about eligibility in your state.**

## You are more likely to be exposed if you:



Undertake outdoor work or leisure activities, like camping, fishing, hiking or gardening, in areas with JE virus



Work with or live close to pigs and waterbirds



Work with mosquitoes, such as environmental health officers or entomologists



Travel to areas with JE virus during the JE virus transmission season



Live or work on the outer islands of the Torres Strait



For further information on **Japanese encephalitis** please scan the QR code.

## CSL Seqirus

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