

# Local Councils Should Help With Dengue Control — MMA

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States and their local authorities should go all out to ensure that construction sites, public parks, and swampy areas in villages and townships are often checked for the breeding of mosquitoes.



The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) views with concern the spike in dengue cases last year.

A press statement from the Ministry of Health (MOH) issued early this month said there was a 150.7 per cent increase in the cumulative number of dengue fever cases reported in 2022, an increase from 39,737 cases to a total of 66,102 cases, compared to 26,365 cases reported in 2021.

The number of cumulative number of deaths due to dengue complications increased by 180 per cent from 20 deaths in 2021 to 56 last year, it said in the statement.

Dengue is a public health issue and its prevention requires a whole of society approach. Both the authorities and the public have an important role in protecting the population against dengue.

As Malaysia has been underspending on health, the MOH, even with its limited funds and resources, has been doing a good job increasing awareness among the public on prevention of dengue.

But it's time the Local Government Development Ministry and municipal councils work together with MOH and assist in enforcement to ensure *Aedes*-free environments.

States and their local authorities should go all out to ensure that construction sites, public parks, and swampy areas in villages and townships are often checked for the breeding of mosquitoes.

The types of plants by the roadside and public structures that can collect water should also be checked for mosquito eggs.

These minor details can have a serious impact on the health of the population. The Local Government Development Ministry should set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for relevant departments under them to tackle the issue of dengue.

The public, on the other hand, must ensure that their home and its surrounding areas do not turn into breeding grounds for the *Aedes* mosquito, the mosquito species which infects people with the dengue virus.

Water collecting in pots, saucers, various types of containers, drains and any other place where water can collect can attract mosquitoes to lay their eggs and multiply.

There is no point in carrying out fogging every other month or so if the people aren't doing their part. The media also plays an important role to educate the public on preventing dengue.

We also wish to advise the public to be careful, especially during the rainy season, as water can collect easily in areas exposed to rainfall.

Children should avoid playing near drains and swampy areas and as an added precaution, spray mosquito repellent if you are going hiking or to a park for exercise.

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- This is the personal opinion of the writer or publication and does not necessarily represent the views of *CodeBlue*.