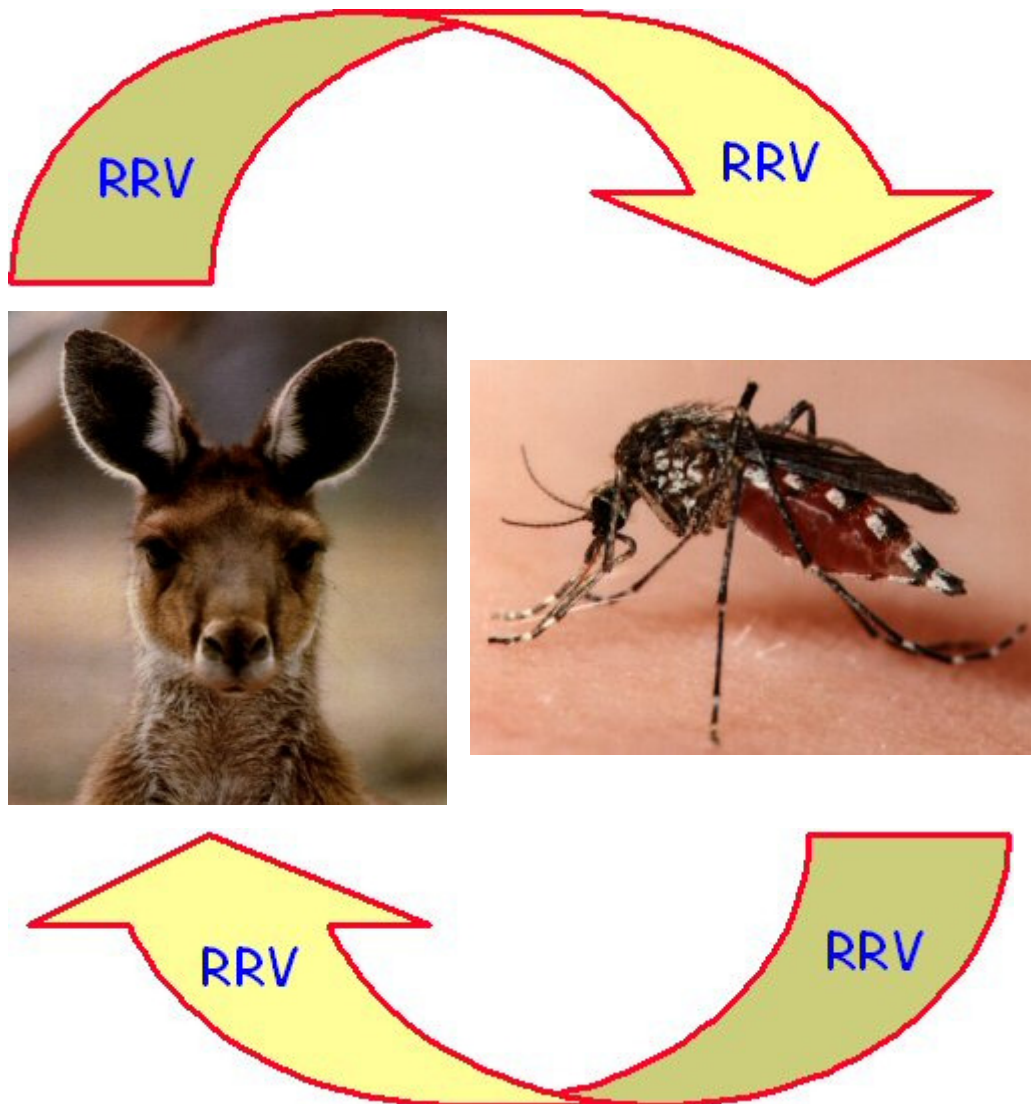


Ross River Virus

What is Ross River Virus?

Ross River Virus (RRV) is a mosquito-borne virus found naturally in Australia. In nature the virus is passed between mosquitoes and wildlife. Kangaroos and wallabies in particular are commonly found infected with the virus.



Humans bitten by an infected mosquito may develop a disease called Epidemic Polyarthrititis which is commonly known as 'Ross River virus disease'.

Correct diagnosis of the disease can only be confirmed by blood test.

Transmission of Ross River Virus and Barmah Forest Virus

Humans and other animals are infected by RRV and BRV after being bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus. Mosquitoes pick up the virus from infected animals. Some species of mosquitoes may short-cut this cycle by passing the virus through their eggs to subsequent mosquito generations.

Humans infected by RRV and BRV may pass the virus back to mosquitoes if they are bitten during the last few days of the incubation period and for several days following onset of symptoms.

Ross River Virus and Barmah Forest virus transmission occurs when temperatures are warm enough for the virus to be active combined with high numbers of mosquito carriers following rainfall.

Symptoms of Ross River Virus and Barmah Infection

The incubation period of Ross River Virus infection varies from three days to three weeks, but symptoms usually appear within seven to fourteen days of being bitten.

People infected by Ross River Virus may develop a wide range of symptoms. Many people infected with Ross River Virus will not develop any noticeable symptoms, those that do may include:

- painful or swollen joints
- sore muscles
- skin rash
- fever
- fatigue
- headache
- dizziness
- swollen lymph nodes
- nausea
- general feeling of being unwell.

Treatment of Ross River Virus Infection

There is no medical cure for Ross River Virus infection. Medical treatment is aimed at easing joint pains and swelling and minimising fatigue and lethargy. Aspirin appears useful to many sufferers in reducing pain and inflammation. Rest is very important for Ross River Virus disease sufferers, particularly during the early stages of the disease.

Stress, physical fatigue and alcohol may cause symptoms to worsen and prolong the duration of the illness.

Useful Contacts

WA Arthritis Foundation Support Groups
http://www.arthritiswa.org.au/services_support.php or Phone Monday to Friday
10am – 4pm 1800 011 041