# Father shares his battle with dengue fever after a mosquito bite on holiday



Ross Constable, a 48-year-old father from Timperley, Cheshire, has shared his harrowing experience following a mosquito bite he sustained during a family holiday in Phuket, Thailand in 2019. After returning home, Constable found himself bedridden for two weeks, battling a range of serious complications linked to his illness, eventually diagnosed as dengue fever—an often-deadly viral disease transmitted through mosquito bites.

Initially, Constable was unconcerned about the mosquito bite and continued to enjoy his ten-day trip. Upon returning to the UK, he began experiencing flu-like symptoms, which included extreme fatigue, high fever, and body aches. Concerned by his deteriorating condition, he contacted the NHS's 111 service, which advised him to consult with a doctor. However, despite informing medical professionals of his recent travels, his symptoms were misattributed to a bug possibly contracted during his flight home.

As the weeks progressed, Ross’s health worsened. He described feeling "really thirsty" and often being "in and out of consciousness." He noted that the bodily pain was overwhelming, with his body feeling akin to "a liquid jelly mass," alongside severe internal pain, particularly behind his eyes. The symptoms escalated to include skin shedding, bleeding gums, muscle spasms, and dizziness, leaving him unable to stand without agony.

Constable, who was working as a secondary school art teacher at the time, lost two stone during this ordeal, which included periods of intense confusion where he struggled to recognise his partner and felt detached from reality. He recalled a particularly disorienting episode where everything around him appeared distorted: "I was taller than buildings around me and arms would stretch across the car park."

After multiple consultations and numerous tests, doctors finally diagnosed him with dengue fever weeks later. Another specialist suggested the possibility of Japanese encephalitis, a viral infection that can cause inflammation of the brain and is often associated with mosquito bites in Asia and the Western Pacific region. However, medical professionals continued to be puzzled by the neurological complications that followed, including the development of Tourette’s syndrome, which led to involuntary tics affecting his social life. Constable explained that he sometimes struggled to speak and would hit himself out of frustration when overwhelmed by his symptoms.

Despite the physical symptoms of dengue fever subsiding, Constable faced significant ongoing challenges with Tourette's syndrome, compounded by severe mental health struggles, including anxiety and depression. While medication was prescribed to manage his Tourette's, he chose to discontinue it due to feelings of emotional numbness, instead relying on the “hugely beneficial” support from his family and friends.

Constable has come to accept that Tourette's syndrome is likely a lifelong condition, acknowledging its profound impact on his daily life. Nevertheless, he has found healing through a combination of support from loved ones, connection with nature, and his passion for art. In an upcoming effort to share his journey and raise awareness, he is set to host an art show at the Hepplestone Art Gallery in Wilmslow on May 8, where he aims to highlight the importance of understanding the healing power of nature, self-acceptance, and support during difficult times.

In expressing his gratitude for being alive, Constable reflected, “I feel really lucky to be alive. I just feel really amazed that I have this still, that I have a life to live,” demonstrating resilience in the face of profound adversity.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2577695/> - This article supports the claim that dengue fever is transmitted through mosquito bites and highlights the importance of understanding its transmission patterns, particularly in regions like Thailand.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7392215/> - This source discusses the increasing burden of dengue virus in the Greater Mekong Subregion, including Thailand, where Ross Constable contracted the disease.
* <https://www.cdc.gov/dengue/symptoms/index.html> - This webpage from the CDC lists symptoms of dengue fever, which align with Ross Constable's experience, including high fever, severe headache, and muscle and joint pains.
* <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-and-a/detail/dengue-and-severe-dengue> - The World Health Organization provides information on dengue fever, including its transmission and severe symptoms, which corroborates Constable's account of his illness.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dengue-fever/> - This NHS webpage explains dengue fever and its diagnosis, which supports the narrative of Ross Constable's misdiagnosis and eventual correct diagnosis after multiple consultations.
* <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/tourettes-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20350465> - This Mayo Clinic webpage describes Tourette's syndrome, which Ross Constable developed following his dengue fever, highlighting its symptoms and impact on daily life.