

# CHIKUNGUNYA FACT SHEET



## Overview

Chikungunya (pronunciation: chik-en-gun-ye) virus is transmitted to people by mosquitoes.

## Signs and Symptoms

- The most common symptoms of chikungunya virus infection are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling or rash.
- Most people infected with chikungunya virus will develop some symptoms.
- Symptoms usually begin three to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

## Causes and Transmission

- Chikungunya virus is transmitted to people through mosquito bites. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites.
- Chikungunya virus is most often spread to people by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. These mosquitoes bite mostly during the daytime.

## Risk Factors

Travelers to areas where local transmission of chikungunya has occurred are at risk.

## Complications

- Chikungunya disease rarely results in death, but the symptoms can be severe and disabling.
- Most patients feel better within a week. In some people, the joint pain may persist for months.
- People at risk for more severe disease include newborns infected around the time of birth, older adults ( $\geq 65$  years), and people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease.

## Tests and Diagnosis

- The symptoms of chikungunya are similar to those of dengue and Zika, diseases spread by the same mosquitoes that transmit chikungunya.
- See your health care provider if you develop the symptoms described above and if you have visited an area where chikungunya is found.
- If you have recently traveled, tell your health care provider when and where you traveled.

## Treatments

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.

- Take medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or paracetamol to reduce fever and pain.
- Do not take aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) until dengue can be ruled out. This is to reduce the risk of bleeding.

### **Prevention**

- No vaccine exists to prevent chikungunya virus infection or disease.
- Prevent chikungunya virus infection by avoiding mosquito bites.
- Use air conditioning or window/door screens or sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Help reduce the number of mosquitoes by emptying standing water from containers such as flowerpots or buckets.
- Insect repellents such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol provide long-lasting protection.
- Treat clothing with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing.
- During the first week of infection, chikungunya virus can be found in the blood and passed from an infected person to another mosquito through mosquito bites. An infected mosquito can then transmit the virus to other people.
- To prevent further spread of the virus, it is important for people to avoid mosquito bites during the first week of illness.

### **Disease Patterns**

- Prior to 2013, chikungunya virus outbreaks had been identified in countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- In late 2013, the first local transmission of chikungunya virus in the Americas was identified in Caribbean countries and territories. Local transmission means that mosquitoes in the area have been infected with the virus and are spreading it to people.
- Beginning in 2014, chikungunya virus disease cases were reported among U.S. travelers returning from affected areas in the Americas. Local transmission was identified in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Limited local transmission also occurred in Florida in 2014 but has not been observed in Florida since then.

### **Additional Information**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/>

*This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician for specific clinical information.*

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