

BACKGROUND

Chikungunya virus is spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. Prior to 2013, chikungunya virus cases and 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. The virus then spread throughout most of the Americas.

WHO DOES THE ISSUE IMPACT?

Chikungunya virus is spread primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*) mosquito. The mosquitoes that spread chikungunya are found in most tropical and subtropical regions of the world, including several US territories and states. Anyone spending time in chikungunya endemic areas should take mosquito-bite prevention measures. People at risk for more severe disease include newborns infected around the time of birth, older adults (≥65 years), and people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease.

COMPLICATIONS

Chikungunya disease does not often result in death, but the symptoms can be severe and disabling.

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 and 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.

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.

In order to diagnose a chikungunya virus infection, a health care provider will need to collect a blood sample from the patient and have it tested for evidence of chikungunya virus infection. The laboratory will run tests on the patient's blood sample to look for antibodies to chikungunya virus or to detect chikungunya virus RNA (viral particles).

TREATMENTS

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat chikungunya virus. To treat the symptoms, you should get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids and 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.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

To prevent Chikungunya

- Use EPA approved insect repellent
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants to cover your skin
- Treat clothing and gear with an insecticide
- Sleep under a mosquito net
- Take steps to control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors by
 - Using screens on windows and doors and repairing holes
 - Using air conditioning
 - Stopping mosquitoes from laying eggs in or near water, i.e., dumping or draining items that hold water such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, trash containers, etc.

If you or a family member might have chikungunya virus:

- See your healthcare provider if you develop any of the symptoms described for chikungunya; tell him or her about your travel

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

PA DOH Vectorborne Disease webpage: [Vectorborne Diseases](#)

CDC chikungunya virus website: <https://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/index.html>

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

If you have any questions, contact us at 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

