FACT SHEET: CHIKUNGUNYA

May 2025

WHAT IS CHIKUNGUNYA?

Chikungunya is a viral illness that is spread to people by mosquitoes. It is endemic in parts of Africa, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, the Asia-Pacific region, and tropical areas of the Americas.

WHO CAN GET CHIKUNGUNYA?

Anyone can get Chikungunya. Most people in the United States who are infected with Chikungunya are travelers returning from areas where the illness is common.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CHIKUNGUNYA?

The most common symptoms are sudden onset of a high fever and joint pain. The joint pain is sometimes severe, causing weakness, and usually lasts for a few days to weeks. Other symptoms include headache, muscle pain, or rash. These symptoms are similar to those experienced with Dengue and Zika. Persons 65 years of age and older, newborns infected around the time of birth, and persons with certain medical conditions (such as cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease) are at higher risk for severe disease.

HOW SOON DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

Symptoms usually begin 3–7 days after a person is exposed to the virus, but onset can range from 1-12 days.

HOW DOES CHIKUNGUNYA SPREAD?

Chikungunya is spread between people by the bite of an infected mosquito. It is most commonly spread by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, which bite during the day and are the same types of mosquitos that spread dengue and Zika. Rarely, bloodborne or vertical (from mother to child) transmission of Chikungunya can occur. There is no evidence that it is spread through breastfeeding or sexual contact.

HOW IS CHIKUNGUNYA TREATED AND IS THERE A VACCINE?

There is no specific treatment for Chikungunya. Care is supportive and based on a patient's clinical condition. Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs should be avoided until dengue is ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding. Currently, there is no vaccine to protect against Chikungunya.

HOW CAN A PERSON PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST CHIKUNGUNYA?

The best way to protect against contracting or spreading Chikungunya is to avoid mosquito bites. Anyone traveling to affected areas, should take the following steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved insect repellents.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- Use air conditioning if possible, keeping windows and doors closed.
- Sleep under a mosquito net.
- Treat clothing and gear with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated items.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Information about chikungunya and other related health topics can be found at cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit dchealth.dc.gov or call (202) 442-5865.

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