

CHIKUNGUNYA FACT SHEET

What is chikungunya?

Chikungunya is an illness caused by a virus that is spread to people through mosquito bites.

Who can get chikungunya?

Anyone. However, very few people (less than 1%) infected with chikungunya develop serious illness and most people (70-80%) bitten by an infected mosquito do not become infected with the virus. Most people in the United States who get chikungunya are travelers returning from areas where the illness is common. Beginning in 2014, mosquitos in Florida were found to be infected with the virus and spread the illness to persons with no recent history of travel to an area affected by chikungunya. This is known as local transmission.

What are the symptoms of chikungunya?

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

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually begin 3–7 days after a person after a person is exposed to the virus.

How is chikungunya spread?

Chikungunya is spread when a mosquito bites an infected person and then bite someone else. It is most commonly spread by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitos. These mosquitos bite during the day and are the same types of mosquitos that spread dengue and zika. Rarely, chikungunya can be spread from mother to child during

delivery. There is no evidence that it is spread through breastfeeding or sexual contact.

Is there a vaccine for chikungunya?

No, currently there is no vaccine to protect against chikungunya.

How is chikungunya treated?

There is no specific treatment for chikungunya. Treatment is supportive and based on a patient's clinical condition. Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding. Symptoms usually last for several days to a week.

How can a person protect themselves against chikungunya?

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

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

If you have chikungunya, protect others from getting sick by avoiding mosquito bites and wearing mosquito repellent during the first week of illness.

Where can I get more information?

Information about chikungunya and other related health topics can be found at www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit www.doh.dc.gov or email us at mosquito.info@dc.gov.