

CHIKUNGUNYA

Controlling the Risk

Chikungunya is a virus that is transmitted to people by infected mosquitoes, the Aedes mosquitoes. The virus causes sudden onset of high fever, severe joint pain, muscle pain and headache. While Chikungunya fever is usually non-fatal, a small number of patients may develop serious complications or chronic conditions. As no vaccine or medication is available, it is important to protect yourself from mosquito bites when traveling to areas where virus transmission occurs in order to prevent becoming infected with the virus.



The virus is spread mainly by the bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes. These mosquito types are characterized by white stripes on their black bodies and legs.

How do humans become infected by Chikungunya?

- The virus is spread mainly by the bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes. These mosquito types are characterized by white stripes on their black bodies and legs.
- These mosquitoes bite mostly during the daytime and can be found indoors and outdoors around homes or hotels.
- The same types of mosquitoes transmit dengue virus.

What are the symptoms of Chikungunya?

The symptoms of Chikungunya include sudden onset of high fever, severe joint pain, joint swelling, muscle pain, rash and headaches. The symptoms appear on average 4 to 7 days (but can range from 1 to 12 days) after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

While most patients recover after a few days to a couple of weeks, a small number of patients may develop chronic joint pains. Other possible, but rare, complications include gastro-intestinal or cardiovascular complications.

How is Chikungunya treated?

No vaccine or medication is currently available to prevent or cure the infection; only symptomatic treatment is available.

Your Responsibility

Precautions to avoid mosquito bites should be taken when staying in risk areas. All visitors are required to:

- Wear proper clothing to minimize skin exposure to day-biting mosquitoes (such as long-sleeved shirts, long trousers/pants and closed toe shoes).
- Wear mosquito repellent with a high percentage of active ingredients.
- Sleep under the bed net provided by Food for the Hungry. If you have not used a bed net in the past, ask a staff member how to properly fit the net on your bed.

While not required, the following measures are also encouraged:

- Utilize mosquito coils and other devices that deter mosquitoes.
- Wear permethrin treated clothing (do not apply permethrin directly to skin).
- When possible, set the air-conditioning to a low temperature at night - mosquitoes do not like cold temperatures.
- When possible, use a fan.

Choosing an insect repellent

An appropriate insect repellent contains one of the following active ingredients:

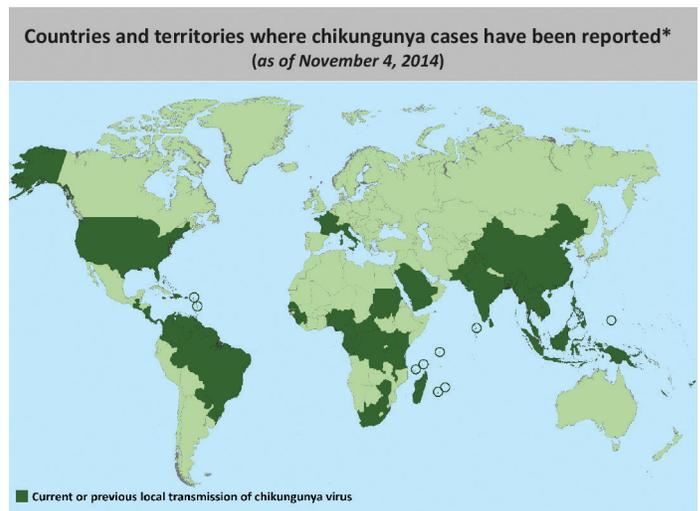
- DEET Picaridin (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and icaridin);
- Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE); or
- PMD IR3535 (Avon Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection.
- Repellents may be applied to exposed skin or be applied to clothing.
- Please adhere to product label instructions.
- Apply repellent after applying sunscreen.
- For children, or anyone with health concerns, please consult with your doctor before using DEET.

What should I do if I suspect that I have Chikungunya?

If you experience the symptoms described above:

- Please see a doctor who can make the correct diagnosis.
- Limit the risk of further mosquito bites as much as possible - this will help prevent the virus from spreading to others in case you do have Chikungunya.

Pregnant women, people with immune disorders or severe chronic illnesses and children under 12 years should take extra precautions. All travelers should consult their Primary Care Physician or Travel Health Professional for personalized health recommendations.



For more information on Chikungunya, please consult the Center for Disease Control:
www.cdc.gov/chikungunya

All information was obtained from
US Center for Disease Control:
www.cdc.gov/chikungunya
and
European Center for Disease Prevention and
control: www.ecdc.europa.eu