

CHIKUNGUNYA – Fact Sheet

Information for the General Public

Chikungunya virus (CHIKV) is carried by infected mosquitoes. The virus causes high fever and severe joint pain that start suddenly. It can also cause headache, muscle pain and rash. Chikungunya (CHIK) does not often result in death, but the symptoms can be disabling, and some people may get severe complications. There is no specific medication available to treat CHIK. There is no vaccine to prevent CHIK. **Avoiding mosquito bites is the key to avoid chikungunya fever (CHIK).**

Why should I be concerned about CHIKV?

- CHIK can be extremely painful and prevent those infected from performing regular daily tasks.
- A recent outbreak in Italy revealed the chance for a similar event in the US.

How is CHIKV spread?

The virus is spread by **bites from infected *Aedes* mosquitoes**. If a person is infected and bitten by a mosquito, that mosquito may later spread the virus by biting another person.

Aedes aegypti



Aedes albopictus



These mosquitoes can be identified by the white stripes on their black bodies and legs. They are aggressive daytime biters, with peak feeding activity at dawn and dusk.

What are the symptoms?

- Sudden onset of **high fever** (>102°F).
- **Severe joint pain** mainly in the arms and legs.
- **Headache**
- **Muscle pain**
- **Back pain**
- **Rash** (~50% of cases)

Symptoms appear on average 3 to 7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Most patients feel better after a few days or weeks. Some people may develop longer-term joint pain.

Complications are rare, but more common in:

1. **Infants (<1 year)**
2. **Elderly (>65 years)**
3. People with **other chronic conditions** such as: diabetes, hypertension, etc.

*****Extra caution should be taken by people in these groups to avoid mosquito bites*****

How is CHIKV treated?

There are no specific medicines for this virus. However, using medicines (other than aspirin) to lower your fever and joint pain may help. **Consult a health care provider.**

How can I avoid becoming infected?

AVOID MOSQUITO BITES! The following will help to reduce your chances of being bitten:

- Wear **long-sleeved shirts and long pants**.
- Use **mosquito repellent** on exposed skin including: **DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and oil of lemon eucalyptus**.
- **Ensure window/door screens are intact**.
- **Use A/C** when available to make households less hospitable to mosquitoes
- Wear **permethrin-treated clothing** to repel and kill mosquitoes.

How can I protect my community?

Aedes mosquitoes live in a wide range of habitats across the US. Standing water is needed for mosquito eggs to develop into adults. **Preventing standing water prevents *Aedes* mosquitoes**. Standing water can collect in tires, flower pots, cans, wading pools, drain pipes, and any other open containers.



Cooperate with your area's mosquito control program, if spraying occurs.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

- **Record your symptoms and see a doctor.**
- **Protect yourself against further mosquito bites.**
 - If you are sick with CHIKV, avoiding bites will help to protect others from getting sick.

Where can I find more information?

<http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/>