



Chikungunya Virus (CHIKV)

What is CHIKV?

Chikungunya virus (pronounced: CHIK-en-GUUN-ye) is carried by infected mosquitoes. The name is an African word meaning "that which bends up," referring to the joint pains of those infected. Though CHIKV does not often result in death, the symptoms can be disabling, and some may get severe complications.

Who gets CHIKV?

Outbreaks have occurred in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Indian and Pacific Ocean regions. In late 2013, Chikungunya virus was found for the first time in the Americas on islands in the Caribbean. An average of 28 CHIKV infections have been reported annually since 2006 in the United States among travelers to affected areas. The number of cases continues to rise in 2014. Chikungunya virus is not currently found in the United States. There is a risk the virus will be imported to new areas by infected travelers.

What are the symptoms of CHIKV?

Sudden onset of high fever ($>102^{\circ}\text{F}$), muscle aches, severe joint pain mainly in the arms, back, and legs, headache, and rash. Symptoms appear on average three to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Most patients feel better after a few days or weeks. Some people may develop long-term joint pain.

How is CHIKV spread?

CHIKV is most often spread to people by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. These are the same mosquitoes that transmit the virus that causes Dengue Fever. They bite mostly during the daytime. If a person is infected and bitten by a mosquito, that mosquito may later spread the virus by biting another person. The female mosquito of this type lives three to four weeks and can bite every three to four days.

Is CHIKV dangerous?

The virus does not often result in death, but in severe cases it can be painful with symptoms lasting weeks or even years. Complications are rare, but more common in infants (<1 year), elderly (>65 years) and people with other chronic conditions such as weak immune systems, diabetes, hypertension, etc.

What should I do if I have symptoms?

Record your symptoms and see a doctor. Your doctor may order blood tests which would likely include tests for both Chikungunya and Dengue Fever (DF), especially if you recently traveled to the Caribbean or South America. DF is another mosquito-borne illness similar to Chikungunya. Protect yourself against further mosquito bites. If you are sick with CHIKV, avoiding mosquito bites will help protect others from getting sick.

How is CHIKV treated?

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

How can I avoid mosquito bites and not get infected with CHIKV?

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Ensure window/door screens are intact.
- Wear permethrin-treated clothing to repel and kill mosquitoes.
- Use air conditioning when available to make households less accessible to mosquitoes.
- Use mosquito repellent on exposed skin.
- Prevent standing water to prevent mosquitoes.

What is Tarrant County doing about CHIKV?

Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) is monitoring the potential local spread of CHIKV and working with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health organizations to closely monitor risks to the public's health. TCPH is also working with the healthcare provider community to increase awareness and teaching residents ways they can protect themselves from mosquitoes.

For more information, call 817-321-4700 or visit <http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

