



Frequently asked questions about

Chikunguna

(pronunciation: /chik-en-gun-ye)

From the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

What is Chikungunya Disease?

Chikungunya is a viral disease that is transmitted to people by mosquitoes and is characterized by acute onset of fever and severe joint pain located in two or more joints (polyarthralgia). Chikungunya outbreaks have occurred in: Africa, Southern Europe, Southeast Asia, and islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In late 2013, the first local transmission in the Americas was reported on islands in the Caribbean. Since then, outbreaks have been reported in several states including Michigan.

What are the signs and symptoms Chikungunya Disease?

The signs and symptoms of Chikungunya Disease are:

- Fever
- Severe joint pains – often in the hand and feet

It may also include:

- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Joint swelling
- Rash

These symptoms usually begin 3 to 7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people will feel better within a week. However, some people may develop longer-term joint pain. While death is rare, some people may be at increased risk for severe disease:

- Newborns exposed during delivery
- Older adults (> than 65 years of age)
- People with existing medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease

How does Chikungunya Disease spread?

Chikungunya is transmitted by the Aedes species of mosquitos. These are the same type of mosquitos known to transmit dengue virus and yellow fever virus. They typically bite during the daytime and use natural locations or habitats (for example treeholes and plant axils) and artificial containers with water to lay their eggs. They lay eggs during the day in water containing organic material (e.g., decaying leaves, algae, etc.) in containers with wide openings and prefer dark-colored containers located in the shade.

Is Chikungunya Disease treatable?

There are no specific treatments recommended for Chikungunya Disease. Medical care is supportive and to help relieve symptoms. Patients should rest, drink plenty of fluids and take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines to relieve fever and pain.

How is Chikungunya Disease diagnosed?

Chikungunya Disease is diagnosed when people who exhibit symptoms present at the doctor's office and undergo blood test to identify the disease. Be sure to inform the doctor if you have recently traveled to the Caribbean or other locations where outbreaks have occurred.

How can I prevent being exposed to Chikungunya Disease?

The best way to prevent contracting this disease is to:

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats.
- Use an appropriate insect repellent as directed.
- Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection. Use products with the following active ingredients:
 - **DEET** (Products containing DEET include Off!, Cutter, Sawyer, and Ultrathon)
 - **Picaridin** (also known as KBR 3023, Bayrepel, and icaridin products containing picaridin include Cutter Advanced, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus, and Autan [outside the US])
 - **Oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE)** or **PMD** (Products containing OLE include Repel and Off! Botanicals)
 - **IR3535** (Products containing IR3535 include Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus Expedition and SkinSmart)
- Always follow product directions and reapply as directed:
 - If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.
 - Follow package directions when applying repellent on children. Avoid applying repellent to their hands, eyes, and mouth.
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). You can buy pre-treated clothing and gear or treat them yourself:
 - Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings. See the product information to find out how long the protection will last.
 - If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions carefully.
 - Do **not** use permethrin directly on skin.
- Stay and sleep in screened or air conditioned rooms.
- Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors.
- Eliminate standing water from the property where mosquitos breed.

For more information about communicable diseases and other important health information, visit us on the web:

www.bhsj.org

Or call your local Health Department office at:

Coldwater
279-9561 x 105

Hillsdale
437-7395 x 110

Three Rivers
273-2161 x 241