



The Facts About CHIKUNGUNYA

*Always Protect Yourself From Biting Mosquitoes ...
At Home or When Traveling*

Mosquitoes are everyone's least favorite summer companion! Harris County, Texas is home to 56 different species of mosquitoes and some of these species are known to transmit diseases such as West Nile Virus, St. Louis Encephalitis, Dengue, and, most recently, Chikungunya.

Enjoy the outdoors at home or when traveling, but remember to protect yourself and your family!

What is Chikungunya?

Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to people by mosquitoes. Until recently, the disease mainly occurred in Africa, Southern Europe, Southeast Asia, and the islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In late 2013, Chikungunya was identified for the first time in the Caribbean islands.

How do people become infected with Chikungunya?

People become infected with chikungunya through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes transmit the viral disease. Both mosquitoes are aggressive, bite mostly during the daytime, and can be found in and around plants homes. Breeding sites include artificial containers such as tires, flower pot saucers, and clogged rain gutters. It is not spread from person-to-person contact.

Who is most at risk?

People at risk include newborns infected around the time of birth, adults older than 65 years of age, and people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease.

What are the symptoms of Chikungunya?

Symptoms usually begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms are fever and severe joint pains in the hands and feet. Other symptoms may include: headache, muscle pain, joint swelling or rash. While most people feel better within a week, some may have joint pain for months. Chikungunya does not often lead to death. If you think you have been infected with chikungunya, contact your health care provider.

How is Chikungunya treated?

There is no vaccine and no medicines to treat chikungunya.

To help relieve symptoms:

- ◆ get plenty of rest
- ◆ drink fluids to prevent dehydration
- ◆ take medicines such as ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen, or paracetamol to relieve fever and pain



What can I do to reduce my risk of getting chikungunya?

To reduce mosquito breeding sites:

- ◆ Remove/empty containers that can hold water such as flowerpots, buckets, tires, and plastic swimming pools. Birdbaths and pet water bowls should be changed at least twice per week.
- ◆ Keep rain gutters clean and draining and repair any household leaks.
- ◆ Make sure screens on windows and doors are in good condition.
- ◆ When watering the lawn, be aware of excess water that may accumulate. Fill in low areas around the yard.
- ◆ Don't feed the storm drains. Sweep lawn clippings, leaves and tree limbs from sidewalks and driveways.

To protect yourself from biting mosquitoes:

- ◆ When outdoors, use an insect repellent containing the active ingredient DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535. Always apply as directed on the label. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under the age of 3 years. Do not allow young children to apply mosquito repellent to themselves; have an adult apply it for them.
- ◆ Use mosquito netting over infant carriers, cribs and strollers.
- ◆ Using a product that combines sunscreen with repellent is not recommended. Repellents and sunscreens can both be used at the same time. It is recommended that sunscreen be applied first. In most instances, insect repellents do not need to be reapplied as often as sunscreens. Always apply as directed on the label.
- ◆ If possible, wear long-sleeved clothing and long pants when mosquitoes are most active.
- ◆ If you are sick with chikungunya, avoiding mosquito bites will help prevent further spread of the virus.

Travel Considerations

Global travel, urbanization, immigration, climate, and presence of the mosquito species known to transmit these diseases in Harris County are all factors that contribute to the possibility of these diseases emerging in our area.

- ◆ If you are planning to travel to an area where chikungunya has been detected, make sure to take personal protective measures.
- ◆ People at increased risk for severe disease should consider not traveling to areas with ongoing chikungunya outbreaks.



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