

Chikungunya

Frequently Asked Questions



What is Chikungunya?

Chikungunya is a viral disease spread by *Aedes species* mosquitoes. Local outbreaks of chikungunya most often occur in tropical and subtropical regions. Since 2013, the virus has spread to over 40 countries in the Caribbean and Americas.

What are the symptoms?

Most people with chikungunya develop fever and pain or swelling in two or more joints 2–12 days after being bitten. Other symptoms include:

- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting
- Skin rash
- Muscle or body aches
- Conjunctivitis
- Fatigue

Symptoms resolve between 7–10 days, but in some cases joint pain can persist for several months after the onset of chikungunya. The mortality rate for chikungunya is less than 1%, with most cases occurring in adults 65 and older.

How does it spread?

Chikungunya is primarily spread to humans by a bite from an infected mosquito. Chikungunya can also spread through blood transfusions, organ donations, and during pregnancy from mother to baby.

Who is at risk of developing Chikungunya?

People who live in or travel to areas with local chikungunya outbreaks are at risk for infection. Certain people are more likely to experience severe symptoms than others, including neonates exposed to the virus during pregnancy, people over the age of 65, and those with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and chronic arthritis.

What should I do if I think I have it?

Since symptoms of chikungunya are similar to other infections spread by mosquitoes like dengue and Zika virus, individuals who suspect they have chikungunya are encouraged to seek medical attention and notify their doctor of their recent travel history. Currently, there is no antiviral therapy for chikungunya. Treatment focuses on getting rest, managing pain, and staying hydrated. For the first 7 days of illness, stay indoors and avoid mosquito bites to prevent spread to others.

How is it prevented?

When travelling to areas with ongoing outbreaks take prevention measures to avoid mosquito bites, especially during the daytime when *Aedes* mosquitoes are most active.

- Stay in air-conditioned or well-screened locations.
- Use mosquito repellent.
- Wear long-sleeved clothes and pants when weather permits.
- Empty standing water outside the home or hotel where you are staying.

Women who are pregnant, adults over 65 years of age, and people with underlying medical conditions should talk to their doctor before traveling to an outbreak area.

For more information contact your doctor, refer to <http://www.phila.gov/Health/> or contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6740.

