

# CHIKUNGUNYA

**Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes. It causes fever and severe joint pain. Chikungunya has been identified in over 60 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.**

## KEY FACTS

Chikungunya:

- is a viral disease transmitted to humans by infected female mosquitoes which bite throughout the daylight hours, though there may be peaks of activity in the early morning and late afternoon;
- causes fever and severe joint pain. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash;
- causes joint pain and is often debilitating and can vary in duration;
- shares some clinical signs with dengue and zika and can be misdiagnosed in areas where they are common;
- has no cure and there is currently no widely available vaccine;
- once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections;
- has been identified in over 60 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

## HEALTH RISKS

- Chikungunya disease does not often result in death, but the symptoms can be severe and disabling.
- Most patients feel better within a week. In some people, the joint pain may persist for months.



Photo: CDC

- People at risk for more severe disease include new-borns infected around the time of birth, older adults and people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease.

## SYMPTOMS

- Chikungunya symptoms usually begin 3-7 days and is characterized by an abrupt onset of fever frequently accompanied by joint pain.
- Other common signs and symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash.
- The joint pain is often very debilitating, but usually lasts for a few days or may be prolonged to months.
- Most patients recover fully, but in some cases joint pain may persist for several months, or even years. Occasional cases of eye, neurological and heart complications have been reported, as well as gastrointestinal complaints.

- Serious complications are not common, but in older people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease the disease can contribute to the cause of death.

## TREATMENT

There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat Chikungunya virus. Treatment is directed primarily at relieving the symptoms. If you get infection by Chikungunya virus:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration. If you're currently abroad, only drink bottled water from a bottle that was properly sealed.
- Take medicine such as acetaminophen or paracetamol to reduce fever and pain.
- Do not take aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs until Dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding).
- If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.

## PREVENTION

The best way to prevent Chikungunya – and other diseases that are transmitted by mosquitos – is by preventing mosquito bites when you travel to one of the infection countries:

- Use insect repellent. Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing.
- If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second.

- Wear clothes, full sleeve and preferably light-coloured that cover as much of the body as possible.
- Use physical barriers such as screens, closed doors and windows.
- Sleep under mosquito nets.
- Empty, clean or cover containers that hold water – such as buckets – so that places where mosquitoes can breed are removed.

### Additional health information to transport workers who travels in between countries

Chikungunya infection rate varies in different parts of the world. Many transport workers travel beyond national boundaries. If you are in a country; where there is an outbreak of Chikungunya you need to be extra careful and protect yourself.

As medical advancement is always happening the ITF will periodically update this information, as necessary. You can also keep yourself updated on Chikungunya infection from WHO website at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/chikungunya>



**ITF Seafarers**  
Your port of call online

Contact us by email or Facebook

Email: [wellbeing@itf.org.uk](mailto:wellbeing@itf.org.uk)

Facebook: @itfwellbeing