



What

Chikungunya is a disease caused by a virus. It is primarily transmitted through the bite of certain infected female mosquitoes, which are mostly, but not exclusively, active during the day. Infected travelers can transmit the virus to new mosquitoes during their illness, potentially introducing Chikungunya into new areas where local transmission may occur.

Maternal-fetal and sexual transmission of the virus can rarely occur.



Who

All travelers visiting Chikungunya-endemic regions are at risk of contracting a Chikungunya infection. The disease can cause large outbreaks with high attack rates, affecting one-third to three-quarters of the population in areas where the virus is circulating.



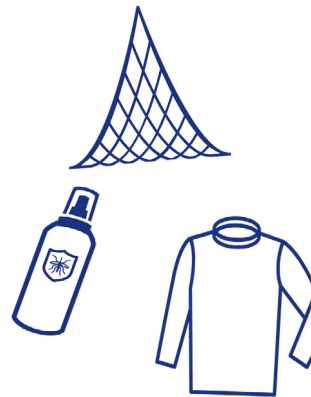
Where and when

The occurrence of the virus may vary worldwide. Most outbreaks happen during the tropical rainy season and subside during the dry season. However, outbreaks in Africa have occurred after periods of drought, when open-water containers serve as breeding sites for mosquitoes. Always consult your travel clinic for the latest information on the spread of Chikungunya and local outbreaks.

Prevention

There is currently no available vaccine against the Chikungunya Virus. It is very important to prevent mosquito bites as much as possible.

This can be done by using insect repellents during the day (for these mosquitoes), wearing protective clothing, sleeping under insect nets, or staying in air-conditioned rooms. If you contract the virus, it is equally important to continue preventing mosquito bites.



Treatment

Blood tests may be used to confirm infection with the virus. There is no antiviral treatment. Treatment focuses on reducing symptoms and includes rest, fluids, and painkillers. Hospitalization is usually not necessary. Long-lasting symptoms may require additional therapy.

Symptoms

Most people develop symptoms after an infection with the Chikungunya Virus. Symptoms usually appear within 3-7 days (though they may vary and take up to 14 days).

Common symptoms include fever, joint pain, headache, muscle aches, and sometimes a rash. Symptoms typically resolve on their own within 1-3 weeks. Some people may experience longer-lasting joint pain.

The case fatality rate is 0.1%.



In case of infection

Management during the acute phase is supportive. Most patients who remain symptomatic experience ongoing joint inflammation, which can last for months or even years, and may require medications typically given to patients with rheumatoid arthritis. However, nearly all patients with Chikungunya arthritis eventually recover.