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### **What is chikungunya?**

Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to people by the bites of infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on infected persons or nonhuman primates.

### **Where does chikungunya occur?**

Chikungunya occurs in many parts of the world including Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Very few cases have been acquired in the United States, the last occurring in 2019.

### **Who gets chikungunya?**

People of all ages can become infected with chikungunya and suffer a debilitating illness. Infants, senior citizens, and people already suffering from other underlying illnesses are at greater risk of a severe illness. To date, no locally acquired cases have been reported among Virginia residents. There is a risk of infected travelers transmitting chikungunya to local Asian tiger mosquitoes which are the most common nuisance mosquito in urban areas of Virginia.

### **How is chikungunya spread?**

People can become infected with chikungunya virus when mosquitoes feed on another infected person and then bite them. People infected with chikungunya virus have high enough levels of virus in their blood (viremia) during the first few days of illness to transmit the virus to mosquitoes.

### **Does past infection with chikungunya make a person immune?**

It is thought that a prior chikungunya infection will provide lasting immunity to the virus.

### **What should I do if I think I have chikungunya?**

If you feel sick and have recently traveled to an area with a chikungunya outbreak, seek evaluation from your healthcare provider and tell him/her about your recent travel. Your doctor may order a laboratory test to determine whether you have chikungunya or some other infection with similar symptoms. Information on countries experiencing chikungunya outbreaks is available at [CDC's Areas at Risk for Chikungunya](#) or [cdc.gov/chikungunya/data-maps/](https://cdc.gov/chikungunya/data-maps/).

### **What are the symptoms of chikungunya**

The most commonly reported symptoms of chikungunya are fever and joint pain. Joint pain may be severe. Other symptoms include headache, fatigue and body aches and rashes. The initial illness may

last for up to 10 days, but joint pains often last longer. Some patients may recover, then experience a relapse of joint pain two to three months after the initial illness. The joint pain may become chronic and last for several years after the acute illness. Fatalities are uncommon but are more likely to occur in elderly patients or people with underlying health conditions.

### **How soon after exposure to symptoms appear?**

Chikungunya symptoms may begin as early as one day or as late as 12 days after an infective mosquito bite, but symptoms usually begin three to seven days after exposure.

### **How is chikungunya diagnosed?**

Special laboratory tests using blood are used to diagnose Chikungunya virus disease. Different kinds of tests may be used depending on how early in the course of illness a person suspected of having Chikungunya disease is seen by a healthcare provider.

### **What is the treatment for chikungunya virus?**

There is no specific treatment available for chikungunya. Healthcare providers primarily provide supportive care like rest, fluids, and fever reducing medications to relieve symptoms.

### **Do people who have been in contact with someone with chikungunya need to be tested and treated?**

Contacts of individuals with chikungunya should be tested if they exhibit similar symptoms and have a history of travel or mosquito exposure. Chikungunya is not transmitted directly from person to person, but an infected individual may pass the virus to mosquitoes, potentially exposing others.

### **How can chikungunya virus infection be prevented?**

If you have chikungunya, you should avoid mosquito bites during the first week of illness to help prevent further spread of the virus. Prevention of mosquito bites is the best protection against chikungunya:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus on exposed skin and/or clothing. The repellent/insecticide permethrin can be used on clothing to protect through several washes. Always follow the directions on the package.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when weather permits.
- Have secure, intact screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites around the home by emptying standing water from flowerpots, buckets, barrels, and other containers. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Empty children's wading pools and store on their side after use.

## How can I learn more about chikungunya?

- If you have concerns about chikungunya, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. You can find your local health department at [vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/).
- Visit CDC's page on chikungunya at [cdc.gov/chikungunya/](http://cdc.gov/chikungunya/).
- You may also contact the Virginia Mosquito Control Association at [mosquito-va.org/](http://mosquito-va.org/) if you have questions about local mosquito control programs.

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External link will open in new window. Click link to exit Virginia Department of Health Website.