

## **Chikungunya Fact Sheet August 2014**

### **What is chikungunya?**

Chikungunya (pronounced chik-en-gun-ye) is an infectious disease with fever and severe joint pain caused by the chikungunya virus.

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

Chikungunya occurs in many tropical and sub-tropical areas of the world, particularly in Africa or South Africa and South East Asia, and islands in the Indian and Pacific Ocean. Recent outbreaks have occurred in the Caribbean.

### **How do people get chikungunya?**

Chikungunya is transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes (also known as yellow fever mosquitoes) and by *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes (also known as Asian tiger mosquitoes). These mosquitoes are not typically found in California, but they have been detected recently in a few California counties. An *Aedes* mosquito can only transmit chikungunya virus after it bites a person who has this virus in their blood. Thus far in California, rare chikungunya infections have been documented only in persons who were infected while travelling outside the United States. A person with chikungunya is not contagious.

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

The most common symptoms of chikungunya virus infection are fever and painful joints, often of the hands and feet. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. Symptoms usually begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. There are other causes of fever and painful joints; your healthcare provider can order different tests to help determine the cause.

### **How is chikungunya treated?**

There is no specific treatment for chikungunya infection. Talk with your doctor about medications to help reduce the fever and joint pains. Rest and fluids are helpful to people with chikungunya. Most people will feel better in about a week, but some people may experience painful joints for several months or longer.

### **What can people do to keep from getting chikungunya?**

There is no vaccine to prevent chikungunya. Travelers to areas where chikungunya occurs should avoid mosquito bites. Mosquito repellents containing DEET, picaridin, or lemon eucalyptus oil should be applied to exposed skin and clothing. Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. If you are not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes inside your home or hotel, sleep under a mosquito bed net.

### **What can people do to help prevent chikungunya from becoming established in California?**

- If you are sick with fever and joint pain after returning from an area where chikungunya occurs, contact your physician and avoid mosquito bites to help prevent possible spread of the virus.
- To reduce mosquito breeding, check your yard weekly for water-filled containers. Clean and scrub bird baths and pet-watering dishes weekly and dump the water from overflow dishes under potted plants and flower pots. Check that gutters are not holding water. Contact your local vector control agency if you detect unusual numbers of mosquitoes or you are being bitten during the day.

Riverside County Vector Control  
www.rivcoeh.org  
(951) 766-9454 (option #7)

Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District  
www.cvmvcd.org  
(760) 342-8287

Northwest Mosquito and Vector Control District  
www.northwestmvcd.org  
(951) 340-9792

### **Where can I find more information about chikungunya?**

Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/> <http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/fact/index.html>  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Aedes-albopictus-and-Aedes-aegypti-Mosquitoes.aspx>