



PestWest **EDGE**ducational Brief



“Chik-en-gun-ye” what?

By Dr. Stuart Mitchell

A viral disease that is transmitted to people by mosquitoes, Chikungunya (chik-en-gun-ye) is occurring in Southern Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, and islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This Alphavirus was located in the Americas on islands in the Caribbean in late 2013.

The mosquitoes that transmit Dengue virus also transmit Chikungunya virus. Aedes species bite mostly during the daytime.



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After being bitten by an infected mosquito, onset of symptoms is 3 to 7 days. Commonly experienced are symptoms of fever and severe joint pain mostly in the hands and feet. Headache, muscle-pain, joint swelling, or rash can also result.

Generally, people feel relief within a week. Extended-term joint pain may result in some people. Deaths are very rare, but newborns exposed during delivery, older adults (>65 years), and those with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease are at increased risk for severe disease.

Currently, there are no antiviral medicines for treatment of Chikungunya. Prophylactic medications to reduce the fever and pain are available.

To date, there is no Chikungunya virus vaccine or medication to prevent infection or disease. Scientists at North Carolina State University are working with a Raleigh, NC Biotech company to develop a vaccine for Chikungunya.

To prevent infection, reduce mosquito exposures or landing potentials.

- Support local vector control programs.
- Use air conditioning, serviceable window- door screens and, if necessary, bed nets.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Wear permethrin-treated clothing.
- Use mosquito repellent on exposed skin.

Strongly consider not traveling to areas with ongoing Chikungunya outbreaks if at increased risk for severe disease. If infected with Chikungunya and experiencing disease, avoiding mosquito bites will help prevent further spread of the virus.



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