

# **CHIKUNGUNYA**

## **Facts**

- Chikungunya (chik'-en-GUN-yah), also called chikungunya virus disease or chikungunya fever, is a viral illness that is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes. The disease resembles dengue fever, and is characterized by severe, sometimes persistent, joint pain (arthritis), as well as fever and rash. It is rarely life-threatening.
- Chikungunya occurs in Africa, India and Southeast Asia. It is primarily found in urban /peri-urban areas.
- There is no specific treatment for chikungunya.
- Prevention centers on avoiding mosquito bites in areas where chikungunya virus may be present, and by eliminating mosquito breeding sites.

### **1. What is chikungunya?**

Chikungunya (also known as chikungunya virus disease or chikungunya fever) is a debilitating, but non-fatal, viral illness that is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes. It resembles dengue fever.

### **2. Which are the states affected by chikungunya?**

The states affected by chikungunya are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat & Kerala. In the year 2006, total number of 1390322 suspected Chikungunya fever cases were reported from the country.

### **3 What is the infectious agent that causes chikungunya?**

Chikungunya is caused by the chikungunya virus, which is classified in the family Togaviridae, genus Alphavirus.

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

Chikungunya is spread by the bite of an Aedes mosquito, primarily Aedes aegypti. Humans are thought to be the major source, or reservoir, of chikungunya virus for mosquitoes. Therefore, the mosquito usually transmits the disease by biting an infected person and then biting someone else. An infected person cannot spread the infection directly to other persons (i.e. it is not a contagious disease). Aedes aegypti mosquitoes bite during the day time.

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

Chikungunya usually starts suddenly with fever, chills, headache, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, and rash. In Swahili, “chikungunya” means “that which contorts or bends up”. This refers to the contorted (or stooped) posture of patients who are afflicted with the severe joint pain (arthritis) which is the most common feature of the disease. Frequently, the infection causes no symptoms, especially in children. While recovery from chikungunya is the expected outcome, convalescence can be prolonged and persistent joint pain may require analgesic (pain medication) and long-term anti-inflammatory therapy. Infection appears to confer lasting immunity.

## **6. How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?**

The time between the bite of a mosquito carrying chikungunya virus and the start of symptoms ranges from 1 to 12 days.

## **7. Who is at risk for chikungunya?**

Anyone who is bitten by an infected mosquito can get chikungunya.

## **8. How can chikungunya be prevented?**

There is neither chikungunya virus vaccine nor drugs are available to cure the infection. Prevention, therefore, centers on avoiding mosquito bites. Eliminating mosquito breeding sites is another key prevention measure. To prevent mosquito bites, do the following:

§ Use mosquito repellents on skin and clothing

§ When indoors, stay in well-screened areas. Use bed nets if sleeping in areas that are not screened or air-conditioned.

§ When working outdoors during day times, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants to avoid mosquito bite.