

Chikungunya

What is Chikungunya?

Chikungunya (pronounced chick-en-gun-ye) is an arboviral disease reportable in Oklahoma and caused by the Chikungunya virus. Outbreaks of Chikungunya have been reported worldwide, particularly in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The virus is not indigenous to the continental United States, meaning that the virus is not found in the US and is not yet being transmitted within the continental US. While Chikungunya has been identified in US residents, all cases had traveled outside the US to affected areas, for tourism, visiting family and friends, mission trips, peace corps, etc.

How is Chikungunya spread?

Chikungunya virus is transmitted between people by mosquito bites. The virus is most often spread to people by the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitos. These mosquitos feed primarily during the daytime and become infected if they bite a person already infected with Chikungunya. These are also the same mosquitos that transmit other viruses like Dengue and Zika, which have similar symptoms to Chikungunya.

What are the symptoms of Chikungunya?

Symptoms usually begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. Death from Chikungunya is rare, but the symptoms can be severe and disabling. Most patients feel better within a week. However, for some people, the symptoms may persist for months. Persons at risk for more severe disease include newborns infected around the time of birth, older adults (>65 years), and persons with underlying medical conditions (e.g., high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease).

How can I reduce the chance of getting infected with Chikungunya?

Currently, there is no vaccine or medicine to prevent Chikungunya. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid mosquito bites while traveling to affected areas. Some tips to protect yourself from mosquito bites include:

- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquito outside. If you are unable to protect yourself from mosquitos inside your place of residence, sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Use mosquito repellants that contain any active ingredient of DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-methane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Treat your clothes and gear with permethrin or buy permethrin-treated clothes and gear
- Empty standing water from containers such as flowerpots, buckets, trash containers, and bird baths.