

A New Virus...

Since its initial detection in Tanzania in 1952, the Chikungunya virus saw its first case of transmission in the Americas and the Caribbean in **December 2013**.

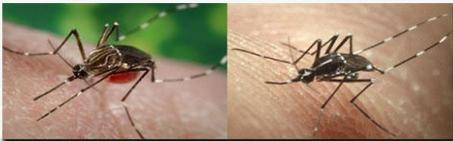
Chikungunya (pronounced “chik-en-gun-ye”) the word comes from the African Mokonde language and means “**bent over in pain**”, a frequent position held by the infected person in anguish. This virus is transmitted to people by mosquitoes.

What is the Chikungunya Virus

This virus is most commonly characterized by high fever, headaches, and joint and muscle pain which onsets three to seven days after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito.

Mode of Transmission of the Chikungunya Virus

Chikungunya virus is transmitted by the bite of the Aedes Aegypti mosquito and the Aedes albopictus mosquito, which are easily recognized by the white stripes around their legs. (See below)



Transmission does not occur from person to person, that is via hugs, kisses, food and is neither airborne.

Who can get this virus?

Anyone can get infected with the Chikungunya virus since the Aedes mosquitoes are present in the region due to our climate, temperature and moist conditions.

A person can only get this virus ONCE. When infected the body develops protective antibodies which are likely to protect the individuals from future infections.

Symptoms of Virus:

- Most people infected with chikungunya virus will develop some symptoms which 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, conjunctivitis, muscle pain, joint swelling, nausea, vomiting or rash.
- Chikungunya disease **does not** often result in death, but the symptoms can be severe and disabling.
- Most patients feel better within a week, however in some people the joint pain may persist for months.
- **People at risk** for more severe disease include:
 1. **Newborns infected around the time of birth**
 2. **Older adults (≥65 years)**
 3. **Individuals with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease.**

What to do if you suspect you might have contracted the Chikungunya virus:

- See your doctor if you develop the symptoms described above or come and visit the **Nurse at the Health Services Unit**. Be sure to indicate if you have recently travelled abroad and to which region.
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink fluids such as water, coconut water, soups, fruit juices and oral rehydration solutions to prevent dehydration
- Ask your Health Care provider about fever and pain relievers.

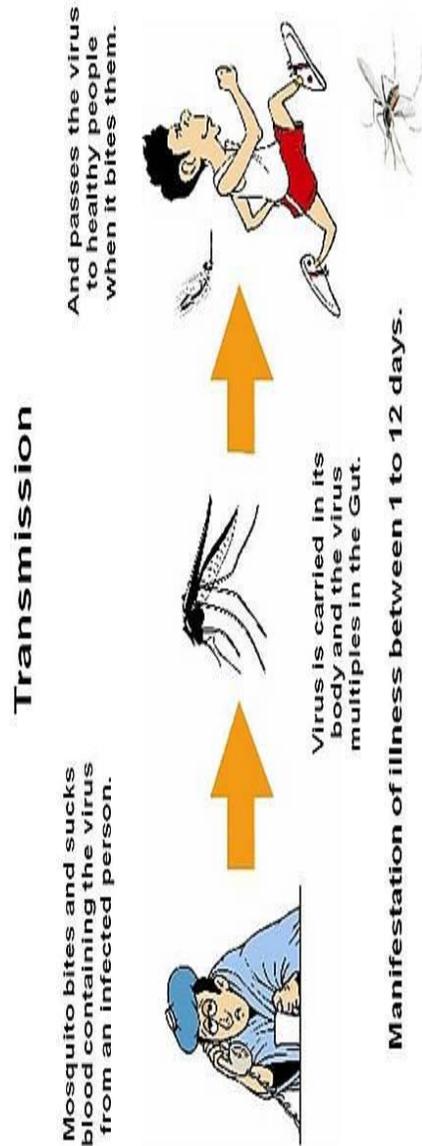
* Currently there is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat the chikungunya virus infection.

Preventative measures against the Chikungunya Virus and other mosquito infectious diseases:

- Use air conditioning or install window / door screens to keep mosquitoes outside
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net
- Cover all water storage containers used to keep water for domestic and other uses.
- Discard all excess containers around the household, like old vehicle tyres, used empty cans and bottles, expired appliances which can serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes
- Clear bushes around house and those in near proximity of it
- When the weather permits wear long sleeved shirts/tops and long dresses, trousers and skirts
- Use mosquito repellants such as Citronella oil and household insecticide sprays to

Four Steps to Identify the Symptoms

eradicate mosquitoes to reduce the risk of being infected.



(Diagram of Transmission)



1. **Look for a high fever.** A high fever is one of the first symptoms of chikungunya, with body temperatures reaching as high as 104 degrees F (40 degrees C). The fever will usually last for about 2 days, before ending abruptly.



2. **Look for joint pain.** The characteristic symptom of chikungunya fever is severe joint pain (or arthritis) in multiple joints, particularly in the extremities



3. **Look for a rash.** Sufferers of chikungunya fever will often develop a rash on their body and limbs. This rash may look like purple or red spots, or small red bumps.



4. **Watch out for other non-specific symptoms.** Other common symptoms in chikungunya sufferers include persistent headaches, nausea, muscle pain, fatigue, vomiting, photophobia and partial loss of taste.

Adapted from:

- <http://www.paho.org>
- <http://www.cdc.gov>
- [Wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com)

For additional information see:

- ✗ www.caribbean360.com
- ✗ www.carpha.org
- ✗ www.chikungunyavirusnet

HSU CONTACT NUMBERS:

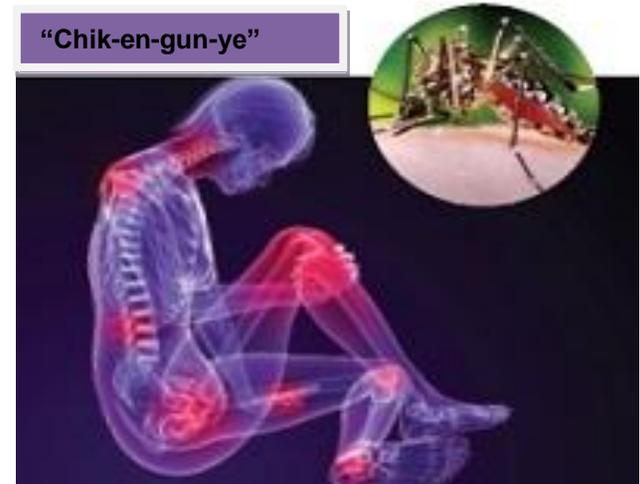


- ◆ Nurse 82149/82152
- ◆ Secretary 82153
- ◆ Counselling 82491
- ◆ Pharmacy 82150

This leaflet was produced by the Health Services Unit, UWI -St. Augustine

CHIKUNGUNYA

“Chik-en-gun-ye”



Health Services Unit
“We’re here for you”