



Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted to humans through the bites of mosquitoes infected with the chikungunya virus. It was first described during an outbreak in southern Tanzania in 1952 and has now been identified in nearly 40 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and, most recently, the Americas. Symptoms usually begin 4 to 8 days after a mosquito bite but can appear anywhere from 2 to 12 days. The most common symptom is an abrupt onset of fever, often accompanied by joint pain. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue, and rash. Severe joint pain usually lasts a few days but can persist for months or even years. Serious complications are uncommon, but in older people, the disease can contribute to the cause of death. There is no vaccine or antiviral drug treatment for chikungunya. Treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms.

Key facts

- Chikungunya was found for the first time in the Caribbean islands in December 2013.
- By end of March 2014, more than 15,000 suspected cases had been reported in the Caribbean.
- Local transmission has been confirmed in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Barthelemy, St. Martin (British part), and St Maarten (Dutch part). Aruba has reported one imported case.
- *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* are the mosquito vectors that transmit chikungunya.
- Prevention and control efforts focus on reducing the number of vectors (mosquitoes) and minimizing the natural or artificial habitats that support their breeding.
- Prevention also relies on reducing human exposure to mosquitoes through window and door screens, using mosquito repellents on exposed skin, wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and supporting local vector control programs.

PAHO/WHO response

- PAHO/WHO formulates evidence-based outbreak management plans and provides technical support and guidance to countries for effective management of cases and outbreaks.
- PAHO/WHO is supporting countries to improve their reporting systems and is providing training on clinical management, diagnosis, and vector control in partnership with PAHO/WHO Collaborating Centers.
- PAHO/WHO publishes guidelines and handbooks for surveillance, case management, laboratory detection, and vector control for its Member States.

For more information, visit: www.paho.org/chikungunya



www.paho.org/WorldHealthDay2014

