



## Chikungunya information for travelers

[Chikungunya](#) is a disease caused by infection with the chikungunya virus that is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes.

### **Transmission**

The most important mosquito vectors are *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, which also transmit dengue and Zika viruses. These species bite during daylight hours with peak activity in the early morning and late afternoon. Both are found biting outdoors but *Aedes aegypti* will also readily bite indoors. There is no direct person-to-person transmission; however, laboratory transmission and vertical transmission in pregnancy and peripartum has been documented. Transmission through transfusion is possible.

### **Nature of the disease/Clinical features**

The incubation period (the time from an infected mosquito bite or other exposure to the start of symptoms) of chikungunya is estimated to be 3-7 days. The name “chikungunya” derives from a Kimakonde word meaning “to become contorted” and describes the stooped appearance of sufferers with joint pain. Chikungunya is an acute febrile illness with sudden onset of fever and joint pains, particularly affecting the hands, wrists, ankles, and feet. Most patients recover after a few days but in some cases the joint pains may persist for weeks, months or even years. Other common signs and symptoms include muscle pain, headache, rash and leukopenia. Occasional cases of gastrointestinal complaints, eye, neurological and heart complications have been reported. Symptoms in some infected individuals could be mild and the infection may go unrecognized or be misdiagnosed in areas where dengue occurs.

### **Geographical distribution**

Chikungunya transmission occurs frequently in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and sporadic outbreaks have been reported elsewhere.

### **Risk for travelers**

In countries or areas at risk and in areas affected by ongoing epidemics.

### **Prophylaxis**

There are no specific antiviral drugs and no commercial vaccine. Treatment is directed primarily at relieving symptoms, particularly joint pain.

### **Precautions**

Travellers should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites both during the day and at night (Chapter 3). This includes the use of insect repellents, wearing long sleeves and pants and ensuring rooms are fitted with screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering.