

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
SURVEILLANCE UNIT

EPI ALERT

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CHIKUNGUNYA ALERT

An alert on Chikungunya Disease has been made by WHO/PAHO.

On the 6th December the authorities of the French side of St. Martin in the Caribbean, reported its first cases of Chikungunya Disease. To date there have been ten(10) laboratory confirmed, four (4) probable and twenty (20) suspected cases. The other part of the isle, a country that is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Sint Maarten), has had no reported cases.

This is the first time locally-acquired cases of Chikungunya have been detected in the Caribbean. In the Americas, imported cases had previously been reported from Brazil, Canada, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique and the United States of America. It is therefore important for Health Care Providers to obtain the travel history of clients presenting to clinics with symptoms suggestive of Chikungunya.

Chikungunya is a viral disease that is rarely fatal and is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected female mosquito. There are two species, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*, which can also transmit other mosquito borne viruses, including Dengue. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes can be found in abundance throughout The Bahamas.

Symptoms of Chikungunya include high fever, with significant pains in the joints e.g. ankles and wrists, which can persist for several

Case Definition

Acute onset of high fever typically greater than 101F and severe joint pains .

Other symptoms include:

- Muscle pain
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Rash
- Fatigue
- **Remember to obtain travel history for the last 3 weeks**

PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Transmission is prevented by:

- Reduction of natural and artificial water filled container habitats
- Use of repellents that contain DEET, IR3535 and/or icaridin on exposed skin.
- Use of Mosquito coils or other insecticide vaporizers that reduce indoor biting.
- The use of insecticides to kill flying mosquitoes, on surfaces in and around containers where the mosquitoes land, and to treat water in containers to kill the immature larvae.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A SUSPECTED CASE OF CHIKUNGUNYA:

1. Obtain a sample of blood (red top tube).
2. Complete Case Investigation Form
3. **Contact Surveillance Unit @ 502-4790, 502-4776, 376-3533 or 376-4705 IMMEDIATELY.**
4. **Send specimen to PMH Lab, for testing and referral to CARPHA**

Case Management

- There are no specific drugs to cure the disease.
- Treat symptomatically after excluding more severe conditions like Malaria, Dengue and Bacterial Infections is recommended.
- Treatment is directed primarily at relieving the symptoms, including the joint pain.
- There is no commercial Chikungunya vaccine.