

Chikungunya Fever

What is Chikungunya Fever?

Chikungunya fever is an acute viral disease caused by the chikungunya virus. It is a notifiable disease in Singapore.

How is the virus transmitted?

It is transmitted to humans by the bite of infected mosquito (Aedes mosquito). Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other humans when they bite. There is no direct person to person spread.

Where is chikungunya fever found?

The disease was first discovered in Eastern Africa in the 1950s. The disease outbreaks have occurred in Africa, Southeast Asia, India, Sri Lanka and the Indian Ocean islands. Outbreaks were also reported in Malaysia and Indonesia in 2006.

What are the symptoms?

The disease is characterized by sudden onset of fever, headache, chills, nausea, vomiting, rash and severe prolonged joint pains. Most symptoms lasts for 3-10 days and the joint pain may last for weeks to months. However there has been no documented case of fatalities due to the disease.

What is the incubation period?

The incubation period (time from infection to illness) is usually 3-7 days.

What is the treatment for chikungunya fever?

There is no specific drug treatment. However lots of rest, plenty of fluids and medication for fever and pain relief will help. Use of Aspirin should be avoided as Aspirin can increase the risk of bleeding.

How can chikungunya fever be prevented?

There is no effective vaccine for the prevention of chikungunya fever. Like dengue fever, it is a mosquito-borne disease and the best prevention is to take precautionary measures to prevent mosquito breeding around the house and to protect against mosquito bites.

Useful tips when travelling to areas with chikungunya fever outbreaks

Wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers when outdoors.

Apply mosquito repellents on exposed skin surfaces when outdoors

Use mosquito coils and bed net if you rest during the day or rest in air-conditioned rooms.

Spray aerosol insecticide indoors.