

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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**FLORIDA HEALTH PALM BEACH COUNTY RAISES
AWARENESS CHIKUNGUNYA FEVER**

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL – The Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County advises residents and visitors to be aware of chikungunya fever, a viral mosquito borne disease that has made its way to the Caribbean countries from Africa, Asia and islands in the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific. Travelers to these countries could carry the virus back to the United States and infect local mosquito populations.

“With a large number of people travelling to and from the Caribbean in Florida we have been monitoring for possible imported cases,” said Dr. Alina Alonso, Director of Florida Health in Palm Beach County. “We encourage all county residents and visitors to practice the drain and cover method to minimize mosquito exposure.”

Dr. Alonso added, “Through our Epidemiological reporting systems we have now identified a male traveler to the Caribbean who has tested positive for the Chikungunya Fever. The man is recovering and protecting himself from exposure to all mosquitoes.”

Mosquitoes can transmit different viruses including chikungunya, West Nile and Eastern equine encephalomyelitis. Chikungunya, like dengue, can be transmitted from an infected human to an Aedes mosquito which in turn can bite another human and pass along the disease. Aedes mosquitoes are day biters which can lay eggs in very small water containers. Early detection of the symptoms and preventing mosquitoes from biting will help prevent the disease from spreading in the United States. County mosquito control will continue to treat areas with active mosquito populations to ensure the safety of communities.

Symptoms of chikungunya usually begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito and can include fever and severe joint pains often in hands and feet. Other symptoms can include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling or rash. Chikungunya fever does not often result in death, but some individuals may experience persistent joint pain. There is currently no vaccine or medication to prevent chikungunya fever. If you have travelled to the Caribbean and feel that you may have contracted chikungunya, see your health care provider. People at increased risk for severe disease include newborns exposed during delivery, older adults (≥65 years), and people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease. A person infected with chikungunya should stay indoors as much as possible until symptoms subside to prevent further transmission.

To minimize exposure to mosquitos, practice the drain and cover method. Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots or any other containers where water has collected and discard any items that may collect water. Clean bird baths and pet water bowls twice a week. If you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long sleeves. You may also apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective. Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months.

For further information contact Florida Department of Health Palm Beach County or visit www.pbchd.com, www.floridahealth.gov, or www.cdc.gov.

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