

Chikungunya

Liverpool School of
Tropical Medicine



What is Chikungunya?

Chikungunya (CHIKV) is a viral infection transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Based on current scientific evidence, it is unlikely that people who have been infected with CHIKV will get reinfected again, but research is ongoing.

The mosquitoes that transmit CHIKV will breed near human habitation and are most active during daylight hours biting from dawn till dusk. Their peak biting hours are mid-morning and late afternoon to twilight.

The number of cases of CHIKV worldwide is increasing dramatically and an increasing number of UK Travellers have been getting the disease. Outbreaks have occurred in the Indian Ocean islands, India, the Pacific islands, Caribbean, Central & South America.

Signs and Symptoms:

The average incubation period for CHIKV is 4-8 days. Onset of the virus is sudden high fever, others include:

- Headache & nausea
- eye sensitivity to light
- severe muscle and joint pain
- skin rashes

CHIKV is rarely fatal.

Most people begin to feel better within a week, but this may vary. However, some symptoms, like joint pain, sometimes last for several weeks or even months. Up to 12 % of people have persistent joint pains after 3 years causing long term disability.

Occasional cases of eye, neurological and heart complications have been reported, as well as gastrointestinal complaints. Serious complications are rare. Those at higher risk include young babies, the elderly and adults with underlying health problems.

While there is no specific treatment for CHIKV, rest, hydration and medications to reduce fever and inflammation are advised.

Vaccine information

There are two licensed CHIKV vaccines in the UK, Ixchik which is a 'live' attenuated vaccine manufactured by Valneva which is suitable for healthy individuals aged between 18 and 59 years of age and Vimkungya a virus like particle vaccine and is not 'live' and suitable for most individuals over the age of 12 years.

CHIKV vaccines are available to individuals at Well Travelled Clinic **subject to a detailed risk assessment**. If you are going to be at risk at your planned destination, please book in for a consultation with one of our nurses by calling 01517053223 or email tropshop@lstmed.ac.uk please note charges apply

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Preventing bites:

- Avoidance of mosquito bites at all times but particularly during daylight hours
- Wear loose long-sleeved tops and trousers
- Apply mosquito repellent containing DEET 30-50% to exposed skin - applied over sun cream.
- DEET containing repellent of no more than 50% can be used on small areas of children's skin but should be avoided in babies under 2 months of age.
- For extra protection consider using a clothing treatment which contains an insecticide called permethrin.

For more information about CHIKV see:

[NaTHNaC - Chikungunya](#)
[NaTHNaC - Country List](#)
[Chikungunya](#) WHO, 2025.

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