

June 25, 2014



Public reminded to protect against mosquito-borne illnesses

Health officials confirm case of chikungunya fever related to current outbreak in the Caribbean

SARASOTA COUNTY — The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) announced today a confirmed case of chikungunya (\chik-en-gun-ye) fever in an individual who recently traveled to the Dominican Republic. The individual is recovering from the illness. The concern about chikungunya, a disease spread by bites from infected mosquitoes, was heightened statewide in May when health officials started to learn of cases occurring in residents across the state after traveling to the Caribbean islands.

There have been no reports of anyone acquiring chikungunya locally in Sarasota County, Florida, nor in the United States.

Sporadic cases of this mosquito-borne disease unrelated to the current outbreak in the Caribbean can occur. Local health officials were notified in early spring of an isolated case of the disease in a person who traveled to Asia. The individual, who first became ill in late December, is recovering and still travels.

“Avoiding mosquito bites is the key to preventing infection with chikungunya and other mosquito-borne diseases,” said DOH-Sarasota Medical Director Dr. William Heymann. “The typical summer rain pattern increases mosquito activity. Residents and visitors are urged to take precautions to reduce sources of standing water which serve as mosquito breeding sites, and to prevent mosquito bites.”



“Aedes species mosquitoes transmit the chikungunya virus and the dengue virus. These mosquitoes bite mostly during the daytime and are associated with the accumulation of water in man-made containers that serve as breeding sites,” said Sarasota County Mosquito Management Director Matt Smith. “Eliminating water sources (buckets, etc.) will greatly reduce encounters with this mosquito. Additionally, make sure that your window screens are in good order to reduce the risk of mosquitoes feeding inside your home.”

DRAIN standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.

- Maintain swimming pools and ensure they are appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

COVER skin with clothing or repellent.

- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeves.
- 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.

COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out.

- Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

People at increased risk for severe illness, and possible complications after being bitten by an infected mosquito include newborns exposed during delivery and infants younger than a year old, adults older than age 65, and people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease.

Symptoms of chikungunya include sudden onset of high fever with a temperature greater than 102 degrees, severe joint pain mainly in the arms and legs, headache, muscle pain, back pain and rash. Symptoms appear on average three to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The majority of people feel better after a few days or weeks; however, some people may develop long-term effects.

If you are not feeling well, consult with your health care provider immediately and protect yourself against additional mosquito bites. Avoiding mosquito bites while you are sick will help to protect others from getting infected.

Learn how to reduce mosquito-breeding sites around your home or to report a mosquito problem:

- Sarasota County Contact Center: 941-861-5000
- Sarasota County: www.scgov.net

Healthcare providers and others with health-related questions:

- DOH Sarasota Disease Intervention Services: 941-861-2837
- DOH-Sarasota Travelers Health Clinic: 941-861-2900 (Sarasota); 941-861-3864 (North Port)
- DOH-Sarasota: www.sarasotahealth.org

Additional information:

- **Florida Department of Health:**
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/index.html>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**
<http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/>
Travel Information: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

The DOH-Sarasota is part of a statewide network of county health departments that work to protect, promote and improve the health of residents and visitors through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at @HealthyFla and on Facebook. For more information about the Florida Department of Health, visit www.floridahealth.gov.

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