

## **Traveling to or from the Caribbean** **The Chikungunya Virus**

The City of Orange Township wants Orange Residents to know about a new mosquito-borne virus that is common in the Caribbean Islands. The Chikungunya Virus has infected people living in or visiting many Caribbean Islands, including the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico and the US or British Virgin Islands.

### **What is Chikungunya Virus?**

Chikungunya is a viral disease that is transmitted to people by mosquitoes. In late 2013, chikungunya has been found for the first time on islands in the Caribbean. Since then, chikungunya has been found in multiple countries or territories in the Caribbean, Central America, or South America. Currently, New Jersey has only seen cases of chikungunya in people who have traveled to the Caribbean. However, the potential exists for local transmission.

It is transmitted by two types of mosquitoes, *Aedes aegypti*, and *Aedes albopictus*. These mosquitoes bite mostly during the daytime. These same mosquitoes can also transmit dengue virus.

### **Signs and Symptoms/Treatment**

The most common symptoms are:

- Fever
- Severe joint pains, often in the hands and feet
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Joint swelling
- Rash

Symptoms usually begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. If you think you might have chikungunya, see your doctor. Even though there aren't any vaccines or antivirals, there are medicines to treat fever and pain. When you see your doctor, tell him/her that you have recently been in the Caribbean.

Most people will feel better within a week, but some may have longer-term joint pain. People who are at more risk include babies whose mothers passed it along during birth,

older adults (65 and over), and people who have medical conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease.

### **Prevention**

“Preventing chikungunya is basically the same as West Nile Virus. For this disease, delaying travel to the Caribbean if possible is probably a good idea. At home, emptying out sources of standing water like kiddie pools and birdbaths will go a long way in lessening your chances of getting sick from both chikungunya and West Nile Virus.

*People should follow these suggestions:*

- Use air conditioning and window/door screens (check for, and repair holes)
- Use bug spray on exposed skin
- Wear long long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Empty standing water from outdoor containers like birdbaths, kiddie pools, toys, planters, etc.
- Think about not going to countries with chikungunya infection

The mosquito control program continues to test for mosquito-borne disease.

More information at [www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/](http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/)