Chikungunya in Grenada

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Current situation

In January 2014, the first transmission of Chikungunya (chik-en-gun-ye) virus in the Western Hemisphere was reported in a few of the northern Caribbean countries. The virus has since been identified in 22 countries in the Caribbean, Central America and South America. Until now, September 17th, 2014, there are 5 reported cases in Grenada (carpha.org).

Transmission

Chikungunya virus is transmitted to people by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. Chikungunya virus is most often spread to people by Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquitoes. These are the same mosquitoes that transmit dengue virus. They bite mostly during the daytime.

Symptoms of infection with Chikungunya

Symptoms usually begin 3–7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, or rash. Chikungunya infection is very rarely deadly, but the symptoms can be severe and disabling. Most patients feel better within a week. In some people, the joint pain may persist for months. Once a person has been infected, he or she is protected from future Chikungunya infection.

Diagnosis

Visit or call the University Health Services (Tel: 444 4671) if you develop the symptoms described above. Your doctor may order blood tests to look for Chikungunya or dengue.

Treatment

There is no medicine to treat Chikungunya virus infection or disease. Symptoms can be decreased by rest and drink fluids to prevent dehydration. Take medicines, such as ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen, or paracetamol, to relieve fever and pain.

Prevention

Chikungunya virus infection prevention is by avoiding mosquito bites: especially during the day. Use window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside and sleep under a mosquito bed net. When weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Use insect repellents containing
DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products which provide long lasting protection. Persons diagnosed with Chikungunya should stay under an insecticide treated bed net during the day, spray their room with a knock-down insecticide and wear insect repellent when moving around outside the net. These measures will help to prevent uninfected mosquitoes from picking up the virus.

For more information, visit: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/

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