



## **MINISTRY OF HEALTH INVESTIGATES REPORTS CASE OF CHIKUNGUNYA**

**ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA, JUNE 20, 2014 – GIS:** The Ministry of Health has intensified its campaign against the eminent threat of Chikungunya as investigation continues into reports of the presence of the virus on the Sister Isle of Carriacou.

In its latest **(CHIKV)** news update Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr. George Mitchell said health officials were called-in to investigate similar like symptoms of the virus in the village of Windward.

Mitchell who is spearheading the Ministry's response told the Government Information Service (GIS) that teams of health officials are on the ground and that specimens are being tested.

The (CMO) said one of the measures being undertaken is a fogging campaign of the immediate vicinity where the suspected cases were reported.

However the senior public health official said the healthcare providers will continue to carry out their work while they await laboratory confirmation of the suspected cases.

Since reports of Chikungunya surfaced in early January the Ministry of Health has been upbeat in its response in relation to the prevention and management of the virus.

Meanwhile the Ministry of Health is appealing to the public to remain calm and see their role as important in preventing an outbreak of the virus.

Public health officials are also calling on the public to ensure the cleanliness of their surroundings as well as the reduction and removal of mosquito breeding sites in and around the home. The Chikungunya virus is primarily spread by the Aedes Aegypti Mosquito which is black and white in colour.

Below is some valuable information to be considered.

### **PREVENTION**

- No vaccine exists to prevent Chikungunya virus infection or disease.
- Prevent Chikungunya virus infection by avoiding mosquito bites.
- The mosquitoes that spread the Chikungunya virus bite mostly during the daytime.

### **PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MOSQUITO BITES**

- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. If you are not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes inside your home or hotel, sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Help reduce the number of mosquitoes outside your home by; keeping your surroundings clean, emptying standing water from containers such as flowerpots, used/old containers, tires or buckets etc.
- When weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use insect repellents.

## **SYMPTOMS, DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT**

### **SYMPTOMS**

- Most people infected with Chikungunya virus will develop some symptoms.
- 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 disease does not often result in death, 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.
- People at risk for more severe disease include newborns infected around the time of birth, older adults (≥65 years), and people with medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease.
- Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

### **DIAGNOSIS**

- The symptoms of Chikungunya are similar to those of dengue, another disease spread by mosquitoes.
- See your doctor if you develop the symptoms described above.
- If you have recently traveled, tell your doctor.
- Your doctor may order blood tests to look for Chikungunya or other similar diseases.

### **TREATMENT**

- There is NO medicine to treat Chikungunya virus infection or disease.
- Decrease the symptoms:
  - Get plenty of rest
  - Drink fluids to prevent dehydration
  - Take medicines, as prescribed by your healthcare provider.

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