



West Nile and Chikungunya Virus

- With some parts of our nation receiving heavy rains, the mosquito population is on the rise
- Be aware of areas that provide breeding grounds for the mosquito, (stagnant water pools)
- Mosquitoes can spread the West Nile and the Chikungunya virus
- Take precautions, such as wear long sleeves and pants, spray yourself with repellent containing DEET

The West Nile virus has been around for the past several years. The West Nile virus can cause some or all of the following symptoms which usually last 3-6 days: Abdominal pain, Diarrhea, Fever, Headache, Lack of Appetite, Muscle aches, Nausea, Rash, Sore Throat, Swollen lymph nodes, and vomiting.

A new mosquito-borne illness is now approaching the US. The **Chikungunya** virus, a mosquito-borne illness that causes high fevers and sometimes intense pain, is spreading rapidly throughout the Caribbean. Now, numerous cases of the disease have appeared in the United States – including 25 in Florida – from travelers who contracted the disease while out of the country, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). And experts say it's only a matter of time before it begins spreading among local mosquitos within the U.S.

The most common symptoms of this virus are fever and joint pain, typically in multiple joints. Like any viral syndrome, chikungunya can also cause muscle aches, headaches, rash and joint swelling. In fact, in the Makonde language, the term “chikungunya” means to be bent out of shape, in reference to the virus’s ability to cause people to contort in pain. “The key thing is it tends to give you a lot of joint pain,” according to CDC.

To avoid the West Nile virus and the chikungunya virus, on an individual level, people can reduce their exposure to these mosquitos by:

- Use of mosquito-repellant products containing DEET
- Wearing long sleeves and pants
- Drain pools of standing water, such as trash bins and plant saucers (mosquitoes breed in stagnant water)
- Community spraying for mosquitoes may also prevent mosquito breeding.

Remember: “No task is so important that it be done at the risk of safety”

