Chikungunya: Emerging Disease

Chikungunya (pronounced chee-koon-gaen’-ya)

The word chikungunya means “that which bends” or “bends one over” in the East African language Mabanda. Although seldom fatal, the virus causes severe and debilitating pain. No vaccine or cure currently exists.

Distribution of chikungunya cases, January 2015

Chikungunya is currently endemic in Southeast Asia, central Africa, and the Caribbean. (Map below includes areas with locally acquired and imported cases.)

An average global temperature increase of 1.5°C could result in widespread outbreaks of chikungunya in the US, Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America.

A new study links climate change to the recent spread of chikungunya. To learn more, visit eurekalert.org.

Symptoms

Fever, headaches, body aches, joint pain and swelling that may last for months or years.

Treatment

No specific treatments or vaccines are used for prevention. Seek medical care.

Prevention

Avoid mosquito bites. Use a bed net at night, insect repellent, and air conditioning.

Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History