



BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION
Communicable Disease Control Division
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HEALTH ADVISORY: Chikungunya

Summary: The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) has received reports of chikungunya cases in Boston residents. All cases had recent travel to the Caribbean, including Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Providers should be aware of the possibility of chikungunya infection in patients that present with symptoms consistent with the infection and recent travel. Confirmed cases of chikungunya should be reported to BPHC at 617-534-5611.

BACKGROUND

Chikungunya is a virus spread by mosquitoes and is endemic to areas of Africa, Asia, southern Europe, and the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In late 2013, chikungunya virus was found in the Caribbean where it has continued to circulate. Chikungunya virus has not been found in the continental United States.

There have been four cases of imported chikungunya in Boston residents over the last week. These are in addition to several confirmed cases in New England over the last month. All cases had recent travel to the Caribbean, including Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

SYMPTOMS, LABORATORY TESTING, AND TREATMENT

Most people with chikungunya will have symptoms. The most common symptoms are acute onset of fever and polyarthralgia. Joint symptoms can be severe and debilitating. Other symptoms include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, and rash. The incubation period is usually 3 to 7 days, but can range from 1 to 12 days. Symptoms usually resolve within 7 to 10 days, but joint pain may persist in some patients. Other complications can also occur.

CDC offers additional information for healthcare providers at the following site:

<http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/hc/clinicalevaluation.html>.

CDC information on testing can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/hc/diagnostic.html>.

The Hinton State Laboratory does not currently have the capacity to provide chikungunya testing, but is working towards being able to offer it. Currently tests are offered by Focus Diagnostics. Info on what Focus provides is here: http://www.focusdx.com/focus/1-reference-laboratory/search_frame.asp?f=3

RNA can often be detected in the first 8 days of illness. Antibodies can be checked after a week; a convalescent serum is also requested.

Current treatment for chikungunya is supportive. There is no specific treatment available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthcare provider should advise their patients and their family members that those planning travel to the Caribbean should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites. This includes using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants when conditions allow, and using door/window screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

The diagnosis of chikungunya or other arboviruses should be considered in patients that present with fever and joint pain who have traveled to a risk area within the 12 days prior to symptom onset.

REPORTING

Healthcare providers and facilities in Boston should report all confirmed cases of chikungunya to the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) at 617-534-5611.

Chikungunya fact sheets are available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole at www.bphc.org/mbi.