



DCHHS
Safe families, healthy lives.

Dallas County Health and Human Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DCHHS Advises Travelers to Protect Against, Avoid Spreading
Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika Viruses**

DALLAS (Jan. 27, 2016) – Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is advising travelers to be aware of Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika viruses. While there have been no reports of locally-acquired cases, imported cases make local spread possible because the mosquitoes that can transmit those viruses are found in Dallas County.

Mosquito season in Dallas County is officially from May to October. However, DCHHS has seen mosquito activity in other months while conducting year-round surveillance.

“Dallas County residents may be traveling to countries where these viruses are endemic and need to be aware of precautions to take while traveling,” said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS director. “Additionally, if they become infected, they should be aware of what to do to help prevent spreading a virus here locally.”

Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika viruses are not spread directly from person to person. All three viruses are spread by the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. The mosquitoes are aggressive daytime biters, prefer to bite people, and live indoors and outdoors near people. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with one of the viruses. Infected mosquitoes can then spread it to other people.

Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika viruses are endemic to tropical regions such as Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Although each virus has a unique set of symptoms, an infected person may experience fever, headache, rash, muscle or joint pain usually within a week of being bitten by a mosquito carrying one of the viruses.

There is no vaccine to prevent Chikungunya, Dengue or Zika. There is no specific treatment for either of the viruses. However, supportive therapy is helpful with managing symptoms.

DCHHS advises travelers with symptoms to see a healthcare provider if they have visited an area where the viruses are present, and tell the healthcare provider when and where they traveled.

“It is very important that travelers understand how they can protect themselves and others,” said Dr. Christopher Perkins, DCHHS medical director/health authority. “Travelers should always use mosquito prevention while they are in countries where these viruses are found, and if they happen to acquire a mosquito-borne virus, they should avoid being bitten again.”

Protecting against further mosquito bites, Perkins said, will reduce the chance of the viruses spreading locally.

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Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika viruses, continued.

DCHHS recommends the 4Ds to reduce exposure to mosquitoes at all times:

- **DEET All Day, Every Day:** Whenever you're outside, use insect repellents that contain DEET or other EPA approved repellents and follow instructions.
- **Dress:** Wear long, loose, and light-colored clothing outside.
- **Drain:** Drain or treat all standing water in and around your home or workplace.
- **Dusk & Dawn:** Limit outdoor activities during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

Standing water can be treated with EPA-approved larvicides that are available for retail purchase. Larvicides are products used to kill immature mosquitoes before they become adults. Larvicides are applied directly to water sources that hold mosquito eggs, larvae, or pupae. When used well, larvicides can help reduce the overall mosquito burden by limiting the number of mosquitoes that are produced, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In addition to the 4Ds, travelers can protect themselves by doing the following:

- Choose a hotel or lodging with air conditioning or screens on windows or doors.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are outside or in a room that is not well-screened.

In 2015, there were eight imported cases of Chikungunya and two imported cases of Dengue. To date, there have been no reports of Zika virus in Dallas County.

For more information on Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika viruses, go to the [DCHHS website](#).

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