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For Immediate Release

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Mosquito-borne Chikungunya virus has arrived in the U.S.

*There is no vaccine for the disease, so mosquito control is the key*

Chikungunya has arrived in the U.S., and it's going to be painful for those who contract the disease.

Chikungunya—also known as “chik-v”—is a new mosquito-borne virus that has been sweeping through the Caribbean since December 2013. Health experts report as many as 170,000 cases of the disease during the current outbreak throughout the islands of the Caribbean, including the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports cases of chikungunya in 15



*Aedes aegypti, known as the Yellow Fever mosquito, spreads the chikungunya virus.*

states, with 25 cases in Florida alone.

The chikungunya virus is transmitted to people through mosquito bites. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through subsequent bites.

Chikungunya is carried by two mosquito species, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*. *Aedes aegypti*, also called the Yellow Fever mosquito, inhabits tropical or sub-tropical climates (including the southern U.S.) and is the vector for the current chikungunya outbreak in the Caribbean. *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian Tiger mosquito, has transmitted the disease in other outbreaks. The Asian Tiger mosquito is common throughout the U.S. as far north as Chicago and Long Island.

Symptoms of chikungunya include fever, headache, and severe pain in the muscles and joints. (The word “chikungunya” in the Makonde language means to be bent out of shape, in reference to the virus’s ability to cause people to contort in pain.)

### Mosquito control is the key

There is no vaccine to prevent the disease, so preventing mosquito bites and controlling mosquito populations is the key to keeping the disease from spreading.

“The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito can breed in a tablespoon of standing water that remains for as little as one week,” said Jonathan Cohen, mosquito control expert and president of Summit Responsible Solutions® ([www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com](http://www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com)), manufacturer of Mosquito Dunks®, the number-

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one selling biological mosquito control product. “The most effective way to control mosquitoes is at the larval stage prior to their emergence as flying, biting adults.”

Because *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water and often in small containers of water, Cohen advises homeowners to be vigilant in eliminating places where water can collect in their yards and gardens. To reduce mosquito populations:

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, flower pots or any other containers where water has collected.
- Remove and discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items left outdoors that can collect water.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate rainwater.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition with appropriate chlorination. Empty the water from children's swimming pools when not in use.
- Treat water that cannot be emptied— such as in ponds, fountains, drain lines, ditches and wherever water collects-- with Mosquito Dunks® and Mosquito Bits® that contain *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (BTI). BTI is a naturally occurring bacterium that kills mosquito larvae but is harmless to other living things.

Chikungunya virus is just one disease that is spread by mosquitoes. Other diseases spread via mosquito bites include West Nile virus, yellow fever, dengue fever, malaria, Eastern Equine Encephalitis and heartworm.

Mosquito Dunks® and Mosquito Bits® are available at home centers, hardware stores and garden centers. Mosquito Dunks® are sold in 2-packs and 6-packs. Mosquito Bits® are packaged in 8-ounce and 30-ounce shaker bottles. For more information visit [www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com](http://www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com).

**Photo Caption:**



The key to controlling mosquito populations is eliminating or treating standing water where mosquitoes lay their eggs. Mosquito Dunks®, which look like small beige donuts, kill mosquito larvae before they can become biting, disease-carrying adults. The active ingredient in Mosquito Dunks® is a naturally occurring bacterium called BTI that is deadly to mosquito larvae but harmless to other living things. Mosquito Dunks® and Mosquito Bits® are available at garden centers and hardware stores. For more information, visit [www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com](http://www.summitresponsiblesolutions.com).

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