



Samoa Ministry of Health Travel Advisory

August 19, 2014

The Samoa Ministry of Health (MOH) with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) are mobilizing a comprehensive response to an outbreak of Chikungunya affecting our nation of Samoa. As of August 19, 2014, there have been 248 cases reported to the National Disease Surveillance and International Health Regulations Division of the Samoa Ministry of Health.

Chikungunya outbreaks have recently been seen in the Pacific Islands over the past few years. In 2011 there was an outbreak in New Caledonia, 2012 in Papua New Guinea, 2013 in Yap and in 2014, the Kingdom of Tonga had an outbreak in April, American Samoa on 19 July and now in Samoa in late July.

What is Chikungunya?

Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted by *Aedes* species mosquitoes. These mosquitoes bite mainly during the daytime. Common symptoms are fever and severe pain in multiple joints, frequently in the hands and feet. Other symptoms may include rash, muscle pain, headache, and joint swelling. Symptoms usually commence 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

What should you do to avoid getting Chikungunya?

Prevent mosquitoes bites:

- Use air conditioning or window/door screens or bed-nets.
- Use mosquito repellents on exposed skin.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Wear permethrin-treated clothing.
- Empty standing water from outdoor containers.
- Support local vector control programs.

The Ministry of Health Samoa recommends that travellers to areas with known ongoing Chikungunya outbreaks protect themselves from mosquito bites. People at increased risk for severe disease are advised to consult their health-care provider, a physician or travel health specialist on prevention guidelines before travel. The specific groups at increased risk include:

- Newborns
- Pregnant women
- Adults more than 65 years old
- Travellers with pre-existing medical conditions (eg. high blood pressure, heart disease, chronic pulmonary or other serious disease and alcohol abuse)

Public Health Control Measures Undertaken

The following public health response and control measures are ongoing:

- Focal spraying around homes of chikungunya cases.
- Focal spraying around Samoa International Airport (Faleolo International Airport and Fagalii Airport), Samoa National Hospital (Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital (TTM)); SIDS venues and accommodation sites in preparation for the forum.
- Spraying of internal and external environment of hotels.
- A national mass clean-up campaign in preparation for SIDS and to reduce mosquito breeding sites has been launched. This is being spearheaded by Government Ministries and their Ministers such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and Ministry of Police and with the support of the Samoa Parliamentarian Advocacy Group for Healthy Living (SPAGHL). Other ongoing clean-up campaign has involved various other Non-governmental organizations and Faith-based organizations in preparation year round.

Mass-Gathering Surveillance

To closely monitor the progress of the chikungunya outbreak and the occurrence of other outbreak-prone diseases, the Samoa Ministry of Health together with partners will implement an enhanced web-based syndromic surveillance system one week before, during and one week after the SIDS forum. This is an early warning system for early detection of outbreaks and to implement appropriate response and control measures.

What should you do if you think you have chikungunya in Samoa?

If you think you may have chikungunya, you should visit the SIDS Clinic if you are a delegation member. For other visitors you could consult a private medical practitioner in Apia or the Samoa National Hospital TTMH.

What should you do if you think you have chikungunya upon returning home?

If you think you may have chikungunya, you should see your personal doctor or visit your nearest health facility.

Further information on chikungunya can be obtained from:

- WHO:www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs327/en/#
- United States CDC:www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/