

Guyana confirms more cases of virus new to region

June 5 2014



In this undated file photo provided by the USDA, an *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is shown on human skin. Guyana is reporting at least 12 more cases of the mosquito-borne virus chikungunya that causes severe joint pain and fever for many of its victims. Health Minister Bheri Ramsarran said late Wednesday, June 4, 2014 that the infections occurred near the border with Suriname and about 20 miles from where the first two cases were documented last week. According to the Centers for Disease Control the chikungunya virus is most often spread to people by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, the same mosquitoes that transmit dengue virus. (AP Photo/USDA, File)

A mosquito-borne virus that has been spreading fast since the first locally transmitted case in the Western Hemisphere has infected at least 12 more people in Guyana.

The Caribbean Public Health Agency confirmed the new cases of [chikungunya](#) from among 130 [blood samples](#) collected in Guyana, Health Minister Bheri Ramsarran said late Wednesday.

The new infections occurred near the border with Suriname and about 20 miles from where the first two cases were documented in Guyana last week, Ramsarran said.

The government is spraying pesticides to control the two species of mosquitoes that spread the virus, which is rarely fatal but causes severe fever and arthritis-like joint pain in many of its victims.

Guyana was the second place in mainland South America to report a locally transmitted case after French Guiana. There have, however, been cases in Venezuela and other countries among people who picked up the virus elsewhere.

The Pan American Health Organization has recorded as of May 30 more than 100,000 confirmed and suspected cases of chikungunya since the first locally transmitted case in the Caribbean in French St. Martin in December.

Local agencies are reporting higher numbers of the virus than the Pan American Health Organization. In the Dominican Republic alone, for example, the health ministry says it has detected more than 103,000 cases.

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