



Frequently Asked Questions: *Zika Virus*

What is Zika virus?

Zika virus is a mild febrile illness caused by a mosquito-borne virus similar to those that cause dengue and West Nile virus infection. It has been identified in several countries in Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean since 2015. Outbreaks have previously been reported in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Local transmission has been reported in Puerto Rico, yet not elsewhere in the United States. Cases of Zika virus have been reported in travelers returning to the United States.

How is Zika virus transmitted?

Zika virus is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, including the same mosquitoes that can transmit dengue and chikungunya. It can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth. It is unknown how often this occurs or what stage of pregnancy is most at risk. There are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding. In addition, Zika virus can be present in semen and transmitted through sexual activity.

Who is at risk of being infected?

Anyone who is living in or traveling to an area where Zika virus is found who has not already been infected with Zika virus is at risk for infection, including pregnant women.

What are the symptoms of Zika virus infection?

Only about 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus are symptomatic. Zika fever is a mild illness. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. Signs and symptoms of Zika virus may include: acute onset of low-grade fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis (reddening of eye), body aches, headache, eye pain, and vomiting.

The Ministry of Health of Brazil has reported an increase in the numbers of newborns with microcephaly as well as other poor pregnancy outcomes in areas experiencing Zika virus outbreaks. Additional studies are needed to further characterize the relationship between Zika virus and poor pregnancy outcomes. More studies are planned to learn more about the risks of Zika virus infection during pregnancy. There are many causes of microcephaly in babies, including genetic abnormalities, environmental factors, and some infections acquired during pregnancy.

How Soon Do Infected People Get Sick?

People typically develop symptoms between 2 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito.

How is Zika virus treated?

Since there is no specific treatment against the virus, treat the symptoms by getting plenty of rest, drink fluids to prevent dehydration, take medicines to relieve fever and pain. Illness typically resolves within a week. Do not take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

What can I do to prevent Zika virus infection?

The best way to avoid Zika virus is to prevent mosquito bites. The best preventive measures are to **Drain** standing water to prevent mosquito breeding around your home or business, **Cover** doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes outside of homes and **Cover** skin with clothing or mosquito repellent to prevent mosquito bites.

DRAIN standing water:

- Drain water from garbage cans, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flowerpots or any other containers where sprinkler or rainwater has collected.
- Discarded old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

COVER your skin with:

- **CLOTHING** - If you must be outside when mosquitoes are active, cover up. Wear comfortable shoes, socks, long pants and long sleeves.
- **REPELLENT** – Apply mosquito repellent to exposed skin and clothing. Always use repellents according to the label. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered repellents with 10-30 percent DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection. Permethrin repellent can also be applied to clothing (but not skin). It is safe for pregnant or nursing women to use EPA-approved repellants if applied according to package label instructions.
- Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old. Sleep under a mosquito bed net when outside or in a room that is not screened.

COVER doors and windows with screens:

- Keep mosquitoes out of your house. Repair damaged screening on windows, doors, porches, and patios.
- If traveling, choose a hotel or lodging with air conditioning or screens on windows and doors.

What should I do if I think I have the Zika virus?

Contact your health care provider if you think you or a family member might be ill due to Zika virus infection. Travelers returning home from areas with active Zika virus transmission should avoid being bitten by mosquitoes for three weeks following travel, especially while ill, to prevent infection of local mosquitoes. Women who were traveling in areas where Zika virus was active during their pregnancy should consult with their obstetrician.

I am pregnant or am trying to become pregnant. Should I travel to a country where cases of Zika have been reported?

CDC has issued a [travel alert \(Level 2-Practice Enhanced Precautions\)](#) for people traveling to regions and certain countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Because specific areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing are likely to change over time, please visit <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices> for more information on current travel notices and <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/> for an updated list of countries with Zika virus transmission.

Until more is known, and out of an abundance of caution, CDC recommends special precautions for pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant:

- Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to the areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Pregnant women who do travel to one of these areas should talk to their doctor or other healthcare provider first and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.
- Women trying to become pregnant should consult with their healthcare provider before traveling to these areas and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.
- If the male partner of a pregnant woman lives in or travels to an area with active Zika virus transmission the couple should abstain from sex or use condoms every time they have vaginal, anal and oral sex for the duration of the pregnancy.

Can Zika virus harm pets or livestock?

There is no evidence to date that suggests that Zika virus negatively impacts domestic pets or livestock.

For more information on mosquito bite prevention visit Florida Department of Health, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/prevention.html> and http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/zika-virus/index.html?utm_source=flhealthIndex.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/> also available in Spanish, http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/mediosdecomunicacion/comunicados/d_recomendaciones_viajeros_virus_del_zika_011516.html.

For Mosquito-borne disease and vector surveillance, please visit, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/surveillance.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/vector/index.html>.