

Zika Virus – A Plan for Your Safety

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What is Zika virus disease (Zika)?

Zika is a disease caused by Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito.

Is this a new virus?

No. Outbreaks of Zika previously have been reported in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Zika virus likely will continue to spread to new areas. In May 2015, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issued an alert regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infection in Brazil. Since that time, local transmission has been reported in many other countries and territories and recently in the southern U.S.

What are the symptoms of Zika?

About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika will get sick. For people who get sick, the illness is usually mild. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected.

The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. Symptoms typically begin 2 to 7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fortunately, people usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika.

How is Zika transmitted?

Zika is primarily transmitted through the bite of infected mosquitoes. It can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth.

There are some investigations going on now about the possible transmission of the Zika virus from human to human during sexual intercourse, so practicing safe sex may be protective.

Who is at risk of being infected and where?

Anyone who lives in or travels to an area where Zika virus is found (mainly parts of Africa, the Middle East, Caribbean and Latin America). For specific countries and now sites in the U.S. in which has been reported see: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.

Why should pregnant women or women planning pregnancy do to protect themselves from the Zika virus?

There have been reports of a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly (a condition in which a baby's head is smaller than expected when compared to babies of the same sex and age) and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant.

Knowledge of the link between Zika and these outcomes is evolving, but until more is known, CDC recommends special precautions for the following groups:

- Women who are pregnant (in any trimester):
 - Consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.
 - If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your personal health care provider first to learn about steps to strictly follow if you must visit to help prevent mosquito bites.
- Women who are trying to become pregnant:
 - Before you travel, talk to your personal health care provider about your plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus infection.

For more information see: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

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