

Zika Virus

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet (Updated February 24, 2016)



What is Zika?

Zika is a viral disease primarily spread by the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, which also can spread dengue and chikungunya. Local outbreaks of Zika have mostly occurred in subtropical and tropical regions.

What are the symptoms?

Approximately 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus will develop symptoms 2-7 days after the mosquito bite, but symptoms can take up to two weeks to appear. The illness is usually mild, and symptoms last for several days to a week. Severe disease is uncommon. Symptoms of Zika can include:

- Mild fever
- Headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Skin rash
- Vomiting

How does Zika spread?

Zika is mainly spread to humans by a bite from a mosquito carrying the virus. Other less common modes of transmission include maternal to fetal transmission, possible sexual transmission, and transfusion- or transplant-acquired infection. To date, there are no reports of infants getting Zika through breastfeeding.

Where has Zika occurred?

Zika has been found in the Caribbean, Central and South America, Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Local outbreaks of Zika have occurred through South/Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico since 2015. Zika has not spread locally in the U.S., although cases have been reported in returning travelers.

Am I at risk for getting Zika?

People who live in or travel to areas with local Zika outbreaks are at risk of developing Zika. Men who traveled to Zika-endemic areas should consider abstaining from sexual activity or using condoms during sex, particularly if they have pregnant partners.

If I am pregnant or planning to become pregnant should I travel?

Scientists are researching a potential link between Zika infection in pregnant women and their babies being born with unusually small heads (microcephaly) and the loss of the unborn baby. **Pregnant women should consider postponing travel to areas with ongoing outbreaks of mosquito-borne disease.** If you plan to travel or have recently returned from an area with outbreaks, talk to your provider. If you must travel, take steps to avoid mosquito bites. Pregnant women who have traveled to areas with active Zika transmission should be monitored, screened, and tested for Zika infection.

What should I do if I think I have been exposed to Zika?

If you develop a fever or other symptoms listed above, contact your healthcare provider and tell them about any recent travel. Your doctor may order tests to look for Zika or other diseases. No medicine to treat the virus is available, but treatment may be given to reduce fever and pain. To help prevent others from getting sick, protect yourself from mosquito bites during the first week of illness.

How is Zika prevented?

There is no vaccine or specific treatment for Zika virus. Mosquitoes that spread Zika virus bite mostly during the daytime. All people traveling to areas with Zika outbreaks should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites to reduce the risk of infection. Prevent mosquito bites by using repellents; staying in air-conditioned or screened accommodations; and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.