Zika Virus: What You Need to Know

Zika is an infection mainly spread by the bite of a certain type of mosquito. The main type of mosquito that spreads Zika is not in Philadelphia right now, but people can get Zika when they travel to places in Central and South America and the Caribbean that have this mosquito. Some countries that currently have Zika outbreaks are Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and Mexico. A neighborhood in Miami Florida also has had Zika spread by mosquitoes. Before traveling, check [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information) for an updated list of places with Zika.

### How can I get Zika?

- From the bite of an infected mosquito.
- By having sex with an infected person.
- From mother to child. A pregnant woman can pass Zika to her baby during pregnancy or at delivery.
- Through blood transfusions and organ transplants.

**Talk to your healthcare provider if you think you are at risk.**

### What are the symptoms?

Only about one in five people who get Zika have symptoms. The symptoms are usually mild, and only last for about a week.

People with Zika usually have one or more of these symptoms:
- Slight fever
- Joint aches and pain
- Skin rash
- Red, itchy eyes

Contact your healthcare provider if you get symptoms after you or your sex partner have visited a place with Zika. Your healthcare provider may give you a blood test.

### If you do not have a healthcare provider, you can go to a health center. Find a nearby health center here:
[http://www.phila.gov/health/services/Serv_MedicalCare.html#lcn](http://www.phila.gov/health/services/Serv_MedicalCare.html#lcn)

### Zika and Pregnancy

Zika is not dangerous for most people. But, it does cause birth defects in babies if a woman gets infected during pregnancy. Pregnant women can get Zika through:
- the bite of a mosquito that has Zika.
- sexual contact with a partner who has Zika, even if he or she does not have symptoms.

**Zika and Birth Defects**

One birth defect linked to Zika is a smaller than normal head. This is called “microcephaly.” Other birth defects include eye defects, hearing loss, and growth problems.

**Tips For Pregnant Women**

To protect the baby:
- Avoid traveling to an area with Zika. Think about canceling or postponing any travel plans to countries with Zika.
- Use condoms or do not have sex until the baby is born if your partner has traveled to a country with Zika or was sick with Zika.

### Tips For Women Trying to Become Pregnant

These tips will help prevent birth defects from Zika:
- If your sex partner has traveled to a country with Zika but did not get sick or is female, you should use condoms/oral barriers and wait to get pregnant for 2 months.
- If you have a male sex partner who was sick with Zika symptoms, you should use condoms and wait to get pregnant for up to 6 months.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about your risk and birth control options.

**PDPH offers free condoms at health centers and other locations. Visit [http://takecontrolphilly.org/map/](http://takecontrolphilly.org/map/) to find out where you can get free condoms.**

If you have questions about testing for Zika, call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health during business hours at 215-685-6742. For more information, you can also visit our website at: [http://www.phila.gov/health/DiseaseControl/zika.html](http://www.phila.gov/health/DiseaseControl/zika.html)
Zika Virus: What You Can Do

I live in Philadelphia and do not plan to travel to any countries with Zika. Should I be worried?
If you have not traveled and do not have a sexual partner who has traveled, then you are probably not at risk.

Is there a treatment for Zika?
There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to cure Zika. People with Zika should get rest and drink fluids. Taking medicine like acetaminophen (Tylenol®) can help reduce fever and pain.

Are there mosquitoes in Philadelphia that can spread Zika?
The main type of mosquito (Aedes aegypti) responsible for the outbreaks in the Caribbean, Mexico and Central and South America is not currently found in Philadelphia. But, a related mosquito (Aedes albopictus) is found here, although it does not spread Zika to humans as well as Aedes aegypti does. You should still protect yourself and your family from being bitten by any mosquitoes since they can carry other diseases, such as West Nile Virus.

How can I protect myself and my family from being bitten by mosquitoes when we are outside?
- Wear insect repellent when outside. There are many insect repellents, but they are not all the same. It may be a liquid, lotion or spray. Make sure you use a repellent with one of these ingredients:
  - DEET (can be used on children age 2 months and older)
  - Picaridin
  - Oil of lemon eucalyptus (only use on children 3 years of age and older)
  - IR3535
- Follow the instructions. Repellent needs to be reapplied in order to keep protecting you.
- Put sunscreen on before repellent.
- An adult should apply repellent to children.
- Wear long pants and long sleeves.

How can I protect myself and my family from being bitten by mosquitoes when I am traveling?
- Use mosquito repellent and wear long pants and sleeves.
- Try to stay in air-conditioned or well-screened places.
- Treat clothing with permethrin, another insect repellent.
- Contact your healthcare provider when you return from a trip to a country with Zika if you have any symptoms. If you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider even if you do not have symptoms.
- For 3 weeks after you return from your trip, continue to avoid mosquito bites using the tips above.
- If you become sick with Zika, avoid mosquito bites during the first week you are sick by staying indoors. If you go outdoors, use the tips above to protect yourself from bites.

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health has a Mosquito Complaint hotline. If mosquitoes are bad in your neighborhood, call us at 215-685-9000 and we will see if we can help to get rid of them.