

# ZIKA Virus

## WHAT IS ZIKA VIRUS?



- **Zika is a virus spreading in the Americas.**
- The virus is spreading so quickly, and has such serious health effects, that the World Health Organization has declared a public health emergency.
- More than 30 countries are affected, including Mexico, the Caribbean, and Brazil.
- Hundreds of cases have been detected in the US, almost all from travelers to other countries.
- Zika virus could infect millions of people in the Western Hemisphere by the end of 2016.
- Scientists have known about Zika virus since 1947, but until recently its impact on pregnant women and babies was not known.

## HOW DO PEOPLE GET ZIKA VIRUS?



- **Zika is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito.**
- The mosquitoes that transmit the virus are Aedes Aegypti and Aedes Albopictus.
- Zika can also be sexually transmitted.
- It is possible that Zika may be transmitted to the baby during childbirth.
- Zika is not known to be transmitted by breastfeeding.
- Currently, Zika is not transmitted by mosquitoes within the continental US.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ZIKA VIRUS?



- **Flu-like symptoms including fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes.**
- Illness is generally mild.
- Symptoms last for 2-7 days.
- Most people with the virus do not get symptoms.
- Only one in four people infected has noticeable symptoms.
- Zika virus can be diagnosed by lab testing.
- There is no special treatment for Zika.
- Treatment for Zika is like treatment for other mild viruses.
- Health experts recommend rest, common medication for pain and fever, and staying hydrated.
- Once a person has been infected with Zika virus, she is probably protected from a future Zika infection.

## WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF ZIKA VIRUS?



- **Zika infection in pregnant women may cause birth defects in their babies.**
- Zika infection in pregnant women can cause microcephaly, a serious birth defect in which the brain does not fully develop and the head is abnormally small.
- Zika infection during pregnancy may cause other problems in babies, especially with eye and ear development and function.
- Zika infection also may increase the risk of Guillain-Barré Syndrome, an autoimmune disease which causes muscle weakness and paralysis, and can be life-threatening.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM PREGNANT?



- **Do not travel to areas with Zika, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).**
- Because Zika can be sexually transmitted, practice safer sex with partners living in or returning from areas where Zika is spreading, or abstain throughout the pregnancy.
- Breastfeeding is recommended for your baby, even if you have had Zika.
- Attend regular checkups with your healthcare providers.
- Be careful to avoid mosquito bites in areas with Aedes mosquitoes, even where Zika is not spreading.
- The CDC counsels women to use any EPA-registered repellent during pregnancy. Unfortunately, there is little research about the safety of repellents to the developing fetus when used during pregnancy.

## WHAT IF I WANT TO GET PREGNANT?



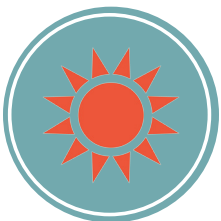
- **Do not travel to areas with Zika, according to the CDC.**
- If you have had Zika, wait 6 months before trying to conceive.
- If you have visited a country with Zika, wait at least one month before trying to conceive, even if you haven't felt sick.
- If you have had Zika, it is unlikely to increase your risk for birth defects in future pregnancies.
- Be careful to avoid mosquito bites in areas with Aedes mosquitoes, even where Zika is not spreading.

## HOW CAN I PREVENT ZIKA VIRUS?



- **Mosquitoes are the main vector for Zika virus.**
- Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water.
- Avoid mosquito bites in areas with Aedes mosquitoes by covering up with long sleeve shirts and long pants, maintaining window and door screens, and using insect repellent.
- Aedes mosquitoes bite during the day and at night, so take precautions at all times.
- Find out if Aedes mosquitoes are in your area: [www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/resources/vector-control.html](http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/resources/vector-control.html)
- Get rid of standing water on your property and in your community by eliminating containers, refuse, blocked drainage ditches, and old tires.
- Avoid sex with someone who has had Zika or may have had Zika.
- There is currently no vaccine for the virus.

## ZIKA AND CLIMATE CHANGE



- **Climate change and the El Niño weather pattern, combined with increases in global travel and urbanization, have helped fuel the spread of Zika-carrying mosquitoes.**
- Mosquitoes thrive in warm, wet environments.
- Climate change is making our world warmer and wetter, on average.
- Climate change may alter the range of the Aedes mosquito, allowing it to move into new areas and infect new people with the viruses it carries.
- Climate change may speed up the development of the Aedes mosquito, allowing it to breed faster and bite more often, infecting more people with the viruses it carries.
- By altering conditions that determine the spread of disease, climate change makes the transmission of viruses like Zika unpredictable and difficult to control.
- Zika virus is an example of the complex patterns of disease transmission that we may continue to face in a changing climate.