

# ZIKA FACT SHEET

## What is Zika?

Zika is a virus closely related to yellow fever, dengue, and West Nile Viruses. It is spread by a type of mosquito found in tropical and sub-tropical areas. Zika has recently come to attention because of reports in Brazil of Zika-infected women having babies born with microcephaly, a birth defect in which a baby's head is smaller than expected. Investigations are currently being done to learn whether Zika infections during pregnancy affect babies.

## Who can get Zika?

Anyone. All cases of Zika in the United States so far have occurred among travelers to countries where there is active and ongoing spread, which is primarily in Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

## What are the symptoms of Zika?

About 1 in 5 people (20%) infected with Zika virus develop symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes (conjunctivitis). Other symptoms could include muscle pain and headache.

## How soon do symptoms appear?

The time from exposure to when symptoms appear is unknown, but is likely to be a few days to one week.

## How is Zika spread?

Zika is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes that spread the virus bite mostly during the daytime. Rarely, Zika can be spread from mother to child, during pregnancy or delivery. There are no reports of infection through breastfeeding. There have been a few reports of Zika being spread through blood transfusion, and recently through sexual contact. During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be found in the blood and passed from an infected person to another mosquito through mosquito bites. An infected mosquito can then spread the virus to other people. If you have Zika, protect others from getting sick by avoiding mosquito bites during the first week of illness.

## Is there a vaccine for Zika?

No, currently there is no vaccine to protect against Zika.

## How is Zika treated?

There is no specific treatment for Zika. Treatment is supportive and based on a patient's clinical condition. Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding. Symptoms usually last for several days to a week. Severe disease is rare and no deaths have been reported.

## Is there a test for Zika infection?

Testing is currently only performed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Please ask your health care provider for guidance to see if you qualify for testing.

## How can people protect themselves against Zika?

Until more is known about Zika, pregnant women should consider postponing travel to areas with ongoing Zika virus spread, and avoiding sexual contact with someone who may have been infected, or use a condom for protection. Anyone traveling to affected areas, should take the following steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellents.
- Treat clothing and gear with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated items.

## Where can I get more information?

Information about Zika and other related health topics can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov>. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit [www.doh.dc.gov](http://www.doh.dc.gov) or email us at [doh.epi@dc.gov](mailto:doh.epi@dc.gov).