



KENT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Zika Virus Alert

What is Zika virus?

Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*A. aegypti* and *A. albopictus*). The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease (Zika) are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat Zika. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and deaths are rare.

Mosquitoes that spread Zika virus are aggressive daytime biters, prefer to bite people, and live indoors and outdoors near people. They can also bite at night. The mosquitoes that spread Zika virus also spread dengue and chikungunya viruses.

Where is Zika virus found?

Zika virus is not currently found in the continental United States, but cases have been reported in returning travelers. Outbreaks of Zika have been reported in tropical Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and most recently in the Americas. Because the mosquitoes that spread Zika virus are found throughout the world, it is likely that outbreaks will continue to spread. Outbreaks of Zika previously have been reported in tropical 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.

Should pregnant women travel to places with Zika outbreaks?

Zika virus can be spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby. There have been reports of a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. Knowledge of the link between Zika and birth defects such as microcephaly is evolving, but until more is known, CDC recommends special precautions for the following groups:

Pregnant women

- Consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus is spreading.
- If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your healthcare provider first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.
- If you have a male partner who lives in or has traveled to an area where Zika is spreading, either abstain from sex or use condoms consistently and correctly for the duration of your pregnancy.

Women trying to get pregnant

- Before you or your male partner travel, talk to your healthcare provider about your plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus infection.
- You and your male partner should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.

What should I do if I have Zika?

Treat the symptoms:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.

- Take medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain.
- Do not take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
- If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.

Protect others: During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be found in the blood and can pass from an infected person to another mosquito through mosquito bites. An infected mosquito can then spread the virus to other people. To help prevent others from getting sick, avoid mosquito bites during the first week of illness by strictly following steps to prevent mosquito bites. See your healthcare provider if you are pregnant and develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes) during a trip or within 2 weeks after traveling to a place where Zika has been reported. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider where you traveled.

