

Zika Virus Disease Information

Information Provided from CDC website

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

Zika virus disease (Zika) is a disease caused by Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected. Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

Zika virus was first discovered in 1947 and is named after the Zika forest in Uganda. In 1952, the first human cases of Zika were detected and since then, outbreaks of Zika have been reported in tropical Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Zika outbreaks have probably occurred in many locations. Before 2007, at least 14 cases of Zika had been documented, although other cases were likely to have occurred and were not reported. Because the symptoms of Zika are similar to those of many other diseases, many cases may not have been recognized.

In May 2015, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issued an alert regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infection in Brazil and on Feb 1, 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Zika virus a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). Local transmission has been reported in many other countries and territories. Zika virus likely will continue to spread to new areas.

Specific areas with ongoing Zika Virus Transmission are often difficult to determine and are likely to change over time. If traveling, please visit [the CDC Travelers' Health site](#) for the most updated travel information.

Symptoms

- Most people infected with Zika virus won't even know they have the disease because they won't have symptoms. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache.
- The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for Zika virus disease is not known, but is likely to be a few days to a week.
- See your healthcare provider if you are pregnant and develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes within 2 weeks after traveling to a place where Zika has been reported. Be sure to tell your health care provider where you traveled.
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito.
- People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected.
- Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for about a week but it can be found longer in some people.
- Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

Through mosquito bites

Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*A. aegypti* and *A. albopictus*). These are the same mosquitoes that spread Dengue and Chikungunya viruses.

- These mosquitoes typically lay eggs in and near standing water in things like buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots and vases. They prefer to bite people, and live indoors and outdoors near people.
 - Mosquitoes that spread chikungunya, dengue, and Zika are aggressive daytime biters. They can also bite at night.
- Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites.

Risks

- Anyone who lives in or travels to an area where Zika virus is found and has not already been infected with Zika virus can get it from mosquito bites. Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

Through sexual contact

- Zika virus can be transmitted through sexual intercourse.
- In known cases of likely sexual transmission, the infected individual had Zika symptoms, but the virus can be transmitted before, during, and after symptoms develop.
- In many cases the infected individual does not exhibit any symptoms of having the Zika Virus.
- The virus is present in semen longer than in blood.
- It is recommended that men traveling to an area where the Zika virus is found use condoms or abstain from intercourse for a minimum of 6 months post travel to a known Zika transmission area if their partner is pregnant or attempting to get pregnant.

Through blood transfusion

- As of February, 1, 2016, there have not been any confirmed blood transfusion transmission cases in the United States.
- There have been multiple reports of blood transfusion transmission cases in Brazil. These reports are currently being investigated.
- During the French Polynesian outbreak, 2.8% of blood donors tested positive for Zika and in previous outbreaks, the virus has been found in blood donors.

From mother to child

- A mother already infected with Zika virus near the time of delivery can pass on the virus to her newborn around the time of birth.
- A pregnant woman can pass Zika virus to her fetus during pregnancy. We are studying the adverse pregnancy and infant outcomes associated with Zika virus infection during pregnancy.
- To date, there are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding. Because of the benefits of breastfeeding, mothers are encouraged to breastfeed even in areas where Zika virus is found.
- Zika virus can be spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus and has been linked to a serious birth defect of the brain called [microcephaly](#) in babies of mothers who had Zika virus while pregnant. CDC recommends special precautions for pregnant women. Pregnant women should consider delaying travel

to [areas with Zika](#). If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your healthcare provider first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip.

What is microcephaly?

Microcephaly is a condition where a baby's head is much smaller than expected. During pregnancy, a baby's head grows because the baby's brain grows. Microcephaly can occur because a baby's brain has not developed properly during pregnancy or has stopped growing after birth, which results in a smaller head size. Microcephaly can be an isolated condition, meaning that it can occur with no other major birth defects, or it can occur in combination with other major birth defects.

What is severe microcephaly?

Severe microcephaly is a more serious, extreme form of this condition where a baby's head is much smaller than expected. Severe microcephaly can result because a baby's brain has not developed properly during pregnancy, or the brain started to develop correctly and then was damaged at some point during pregnancy.

Other Problems

Babies with microcephaly can have a range of other problems, depending on how severe their microcephaly is. Microcephaly has been linked with the following problems:

- Seizures
- Developmental delay, such as problems with speech or other developmental milestones like sitting, standing, and walking)
- Intellectual disability (decreased ability to learn and function in daily life)
- Problems with movement and balance
- Feeding problems, such as difficulty swallowing
- Hearing loss
- Vision problems

These problems can range from mild to severe and are often life-long. Because the baby's brain is small and underdeveloped, babies with severe microcephaly can have more of these problems, or have more difficulty with them, than babies with milder microcephaly. Severe microcephaly also can be life-threatening. Because it is difficult to predict at birth what problems a baby will have from microcephaly, babies with microcephaly often need close follow-up through regular check-ups with a healthcare provider to monitor their growth and development.