



Facts About Zika Virus

What is Zika virus?

Zika virus is a disease primarily transmitted by mosquitoes. The disease has historically occurred in Africa, Southeast Asia and islands in the Pacific Ocean. In May 2015, Zika virus was found for the first time in the Western Hemisphere in northeastern Brazil. The virus has since spread through much of the Caribbean, Central America and South America. Mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission has also been reported in the continental United States in Miami-Dade County, Florida as well as Brownsville, Texas. There have been no reported cases of Zika virus disease transmission through mosquito bites in Ohio. However, cases have been reported in travelers returning from Zika virus-affected areas and in a partner of a traveler returning from Zika virus-affected areas. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains an updated list of affected countries and territories as well as associated travel advisories on its website at www.cdc.gov/zika.

What are the symptoms of Zika virus infection?

Many people infected with Zika virus will not have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms with most people feeling better within a week. Symptoms of Zika virus include fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis (red eyes), muscle pain and headache. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon, and deaths are rare. Rare complications may include Guillain-Barré syndrome (neurologic abnormalities) following a Zika virus infection.

What are the concerns about Zika virus and pregnancy?

Zika virus can be spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus. There have been reports of a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly in babies of mothers who had Zika virus while pregnant. Knowledge of the link between Zika and birth defects is evolving, but until more is known, CDC recommends special precautions for pregnant women. Pregnant women in any trimester should avoid 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 your trip.

Until more is known, CDC recommends that people who are trying to get pregnant talk to their healthcare providers before traveling to areas with Zika virus transmission. Because sexual transmission is possible, both men and women should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip and take precautions after the trip to prevent transmission to their sexual partners. More information about Zika virus and pregnancy is available on CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/zika.

How do people get Zika virus, and is it contagious?

There is no indication that Zika virus can spread from person to person through casual contact.



The most common way people get Zika virus is through the bite of an infected mosquito. The primary mosquito that transmits Zika virus is *Aedes aegypti*, the yellow fever mosquito. This mosquito is found in the tropics and southern United States. It is not established in Ohio. *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian tiger mosquito is established in parts of Ohio and may potentially transmit Zika virus in the United States, although it has not yet been implicated in the transmission of human cases.



Yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, which can carry dengue chikungunya or Zika viruses. Photo by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Zika virus also can be transmitted through sexual contact from a person who has Zika virus to his or her partners. Zika virus can be passed through sex, even if the infected person does not have symptoms. The virus can be passed from infected persons before their symptoms start, while they have symptoms and after their symptoms end. Studies are underway to better understand the sexual transmission of Zika virus.

More information about Zika virus sexual transmission is available on CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/zika.

A mother can pass Zika virus to her fetus during pregnancy. A mother already infected with Zika virus can pass on the virus to her newborn around the time of birth, but this is rare. To date, there are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breast milk. Because of the benefits of breastfeeding, mothers are encouraged to breastfeed even in areas where Zika virus is found.

There have not been any confirmed blood transfusion transmission cases in the United States at this time. There have been reports of blood transfusion transmission cases in Brazil, and these reports continue to be investigated.

There has been one reported case of laboratory-acquired Zika virus disease in the United States. To date, no cases of confirmed Zika virus transmission in healthcare settings have been reported in the United States. Recommendations are available for healthcare providers on CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/zika.

Protect Yourself From Mosquito Bites



Daytime is most dangerous

Mosquitoes that spread chikungunya, dengue, and Zika are aggressive daytime biters. They can also bite at night.



Use insect repellent It works!

Look for the following active ingredients:
• DEET • PICARIDIN • IR3535



Wear protective clothes

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and use insect repellent. For extra protection, treat clothing with permethrin.



Mosquito-proof your home

Use screens on windows and doors. Use air conditioning when available. Keep mosquitoes from laying eggs in and near standing water.

How is a Zika virus infection treated?

There is no specific treatment for a Zika virus infection. Treat the symptoms by getting plenty of rest, drinking fluids to stay hydrated and taking medications to reduce fever and pain such as acetaminophen. Avoid taking aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications. If you are pregnant, contact your obstetrician or prenatal care provider for additional follow-up.

How can I prevent becoming infected with Zika virus or spreading it to others?

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika virus infections at this time. Preventing mosquito bites is the best defense against Zika virus infections and other mosquito-borne viruses.

CDC recommends that pregnant women avoid travel to areas with Zika virus transmission. To prevent potential Zika virus sexual transmission, CDC recommends that people who have traveled to or reside in an area with active Zika transmission and their partner is pregnant use condoms from start to finish every time they have vaginal, anal or oral sex or abstain from sex throughout the duration of the pregnancy. CDC also recommends that pregnant women without symptoms of Zika virus be offered testing after returning from areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission to determine if the fetus is at risk for infection. People who have traveled to or reside in an area with Zika virus transmission and are planning a pregnancy with their partner should discuss their plans with a healthcare provider to determine the risk and options available. CDC recommends that men who have traveled to an area with Zika virus transmission consider using condoms or abstaining from sex for at least 6 months after travel (if they do not have symptoms) or for at least 6 months from the start of symptoms (or Zika diagnosis) if they become ill. Women who have traveled to an area with Zika virus transmission who are not pregnant or planning to become pregnant should consider using condoms or abstaining from sex for at least 8 weeks after travel (if they do not have symptoms) or for at least 8 weeks from the start of symptoms (or Zika diagnosis) if they become ill. Testing blood, semen, vaginal fluids, or urine is not recommended to determine how likely a person is to pass Zika virus through sex. Because Zika virus can remain in semen longer than blood, someone might have a negative blood test but a positive semen test. The results of the semen and vaginal fluid tests are difficult to interpret.

To date, there have been no confirmed blood transfusion-transmission cases of Zika virus in the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that blood centers in all states and U.S. territories screen individual units of donated blood for Zika virus. Blood donations that test positive for Zika virus are removed from the blood supply.

As a precaution, it is recommend that people suspected to have Zika virus avoid mosquito exposure for the week after symptom onset when mosquitoes are active (usually from May to October in Ohio) in order to prevent the possibility that mosquitoes might become infected by biting an infected person and then transmit the virus to other people.

Can my pets be infected with Zika?

At this time, animals do not appear to be involved in the spread of Zika virus. There is no evidence that Zika virus is spread to people from contact with animals. There have not been any reports of pets or other types of animals becoming sick with Zika virus. More research is needed to better understand Zika virus in animals.

For more information, please visit these websites:

- ODH Zika Virus Information: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/zika>
- CDC Zika Virus Information: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika>
- CDC Areas with Active Zika Virus Transmission: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>
- CDC Insect Repellent Use & Safety: <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html>
- World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/topics/zika/en/>
- Pan-American Health Organization:
http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_topics&view=article&id=427&Itemid=41484&lang=en

Adapted from materials developed by the Ohio Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration