

# ZIKA 101: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



*With its possible link to birth defects, the World Health Organization has labeled the Zika virus a global health emergency. Here is what you need to know:*

## ▶ *What is the Zika virus?*

Zika is an emerging mosquito-borne virus that usually causes a mild illness or no symptoms at all, but the virus can sometimes have serious complications, especially to developing fetuses.

## ▶ *How do you get it?*

The main way the Zika virus is spread is through the bite of certain *Aedes* species mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite a human who has the virus, and they are then capable of spreading the virus to other susceptible humans. It's recently been shown that the virus can be spread from human to human through infected bodily fluids, but that mode of transmission remains rare.

## ▶ *What are the symptoms?*



fever



joint pain



skin rash



red eyes

Some patients report muscle pain, general malaise, headache and vomiting. Symptoms typically last between two and seven days. Complications are rare, but some cases require hospitalization for supportive care.

**75-80%** of those infected show **no symptoms at all**



people infected will **experience symptoms**

## ▶ *Who's at risk?*

Everyone who hasn't had the virus is potentially at risk.

### **PREGNANT WOMEN**

- For pregnant women, contracting the virus represents a risk to her unborn baby. Zika appears to be associated with miscarriage and microcephaly, a birth defect in which the infant has an unusually small head and abnormal brain development.

### **ANYONE**

- For everyone else, the biggest potential complication is Guillain-Barré syndrome, in which the immune system attacks the body's own nerve cells, causing paralysis.

## ▶ *Is there a treatment?*

No, other than making the patient more comfortable with symptomatic treatment, there is no specific cure or treatment for Zika.

## ▶ *How can I protect myself?*

With no vaccine, the best way to prevent Zika is to avoid mosquito bites.

- Eliminate standing water and other mosquito breeding sites
- Wear protective clothing
- Use insect repellent containing either 25% DEET or 20% Picaridin
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens
- Men who might be infected should also use condoms to avoid infecting their sexual partners

**FOR MORE  
INFO ONLINE:**

[vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360](http://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360)

**ZIKA<sub>360</sub>**

# ZIKA: PREVENTION TIPS



## ► *What we know:*

- No vaccine exists to prevent Zika
- Zika is an emerging mosquito-borne virus
- Zika causes a mild illness or no symptoms at all, but the virus can sometimes have serious complications, especially to developing fetuses
- Mosquitoes that spread chikungunya, dengue and Zika are aggressive daytime biters, but they can also bite at night
- These mosquitoes are abundant in many urban environments of Texas
- The best prevention is to avoid mosquito bites
- It's been shown that the virus can also be spread human to human through sexual interaction, but this mode of transmission remains rare

## ► *Prevent bites:*

- Cover exposed skin with long-sleeves and pants
- Wear light-colored clothing (mosquitoes like dark colors)
- Use an insect repellent containing 25% DEET or 20% Picaridin
- Apply sunscreen first and insect repellent second
- Consider permethrin-treated clothing and gear (or treat them yourself)

## ► *Protect your home:*

- Screen in windows and doors and repair holes to keep mosquitoes at bay
- Use air conditioning when available, mosquitoes prefer hot environments
- Eliminate standing water by emptying, scrubbing and turning over or throwing out items that hold water (once per week)
- Mosquitoes can breed in standing water as small as what is contained in a bottle cap and the eggs can survive even without water for months

## ► *Protect others from getting sick:*

- Prevent mosquito-borne transmission by avoiding mosquito bites during the first week of illness
- Prevent Zika from spreading through sexual contact, use barrier contraceptives, like condoms

**FOR MORE  
INFO ONLINE:**

[vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360](http://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360)



# ZIKA & PREGNANCY: WHAT WOMEN SHOULD KNOW



*Evidence is mounting that the Zika virus causes both miscarriages and microcephaly, a birth defect in which infants are born with unusually small heads and often have corresponding brain damage, raising concern among pregnant women across the globe. Here are seven facts to know if you are pregnant and worried about Zika.*

**1**

## ***Consider postponing travel to countries with Zika***

The CDC has advised pregnant women to avoid travel to countries that have local transmission of the Zika virus. With no treatment or vaccine, the only way for pregnant women to stay safe is to avoid exposure completely. The list is growing, but includes more than 30 countries and territories in Central and South America and the Caribbean, including Brazil, Barbados, Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as Cape Verde in Africa and the Pacific Islands. Keep in mind that half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned, and if you're planning to visit a country where the Zika virus is endemic, birth control is even more important than usual, both before your trip and for several weeks after your return.

**2**

## ***If you're pregnant and recently visited a country with Zika transmission, get tested***

Pregnant women who have recently traveled to an area with Zika should consult with their health care provider to determine possible next steps, which may include tests for the virus and close monitoring of both you and your unborn baby.

**3**

## ***The first trimester poses the greatest risk***

Some evidence exists that there is a greater risk when the mother is infected during the first trimester. As many women don't realize they're pregnant until halfway through this time, it is extremely important for anyone who even might be pregnant to take sensible precautions to avoid the virus.

**4**

## ***Zika clears from the body in about a week***

For those recently pregnant and worried about a previous vacation to the Caribbean (or an area with Zika transmission), there is no cause for concern. Research shows the virus clears from blood within a week, and there is no evidence that Zika will affect future pregnancies.

**5**

## ***Zika is mainly spread by mosquitos, but can be sexually transmitted***

Zika virus is spread through the bite of certain *Aedes* species mosquitoes, which also transmit dengue, yellow fever and chikungunya viruses. While rare, it's recently been shown that the virus can be spread from human to human through infected bodily fluids. Men who might be infected should use barrier contraceptives, such as condoms, to avoid infecting their sexual partners.

**6**

## ***You can safely use insect repellent during pregnancy***

There are no current treatments or vaccines for the virus, so preventing bites is key. The CDC advises pregnant women—or those who are breastfeeding—to choose an EPA-registered insect repellent.

**7**

## ***Breastfeeding is safe***

The Zika virus has been detected in human breast milk, but it is currently unknown if the virus is transmissible via this route. The position of the World Health Organization is that due to the great benefits of breastfeeding, women in areas impacted by the virus should not refrain due to Zika.

**FOR MORE  
INFO ONLINE:**

[vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360](http://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360)

**ZIKA<sub>360</sub>**