



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION START HERE

Zika Virus Infection

Zika is a viral infection spread by mosquito bites. Recently, Zika virus infections in pregnant women have been linked to infants born with birth defects. Ongoing Zika virus transmission is predominately occurring in South and Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have issued a Travel Alert for all of these areas. This information paper is intended to raise awareness of Zika virus and recommend precautions for those travelling to areas of ongoing transmission.

How do you become infected?

The virus is spread two ways:

- by a bite from an infected mosquito
- possibly by a mother to her fetus during pregnancy

What is your risk of becoming infected?

Navy and Marine Corps personnel, and their families, are at risk when travelling to areas experiencing ongoing Zika virus transmission. Infection risk is reduced by taking measures to avoid mosquito bites. Local transmission of Zika virus has not been reported in the United States.

What are the typical symptoms?

- Fever
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Muscle Pain
- Rash
- Headache
- Joint Pain

Most people infected with Zika virus have no symptoms. About one in five people infected will develop mild symptoms lasting several days to a week. Symptoms typically appear 2—7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

How can you prevent being infected if you do travel to Zika virus areas?

- No vaccine or drug is currently available to prevent Zika virus infection, and there is currently no specific anti-viral treatment for the disease. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid mosquito bites while in areas of ongoing transmission. Note: mosquitoes that spread Zika virus bite mostly during the daytime, but bites should be avoided day and night

Until more is known, and out of an abundance of caution, the CDC recommends pregnant women consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is occurring – currently the Caribbean, Central America, South America, Mexico, Cape Verde, and Samoa. Pregnant women, or women trying to become

pregnant, who do travel to these areas should talk to their healthcare provider first, and they should take strict steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.

The following steps are recommended if you must travel to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission:

- Choose a hotel or lodging with air conditioning or with screens on windows and doors.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are outside or in a room that is not well screened.
- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, or IR3535. These are safe for pregnant women when used as directed.
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and equipment.

What should you do if you suspect you have been infected?

If you or someone you know develops sudden fever, rash, joint aches, or conjunctivitis (red, irritated eyes) within two weeks of travelling to an area of ongoing Zika virus transmission, see your healthcare provider immediately, and report your symptoms and travel history. They will coordinate testing for Zika virus if indicated and help manage your symptoms. Because Zika virus is often transmitted in the same geographic areas as dengue fever, you should avoid taking aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) until dengue infection is ruled-out (may increase risk of severe symptoms). You may use acetaminophen to treat fever and other symptoms. Finally, take strict steps to avoid mosquito bites during the first week after symptoms begin, to avoid further spread of Zika virus.

Zika Virus Resources

- **CDC information hotline:**
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)
- **CDC Zika virus Email:**
Eoevent164@cdc.gov
- **Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Zika virus information:**
<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/Pages/Topics-in-Preventive-Medicine.aspx>
- **CDC Zika virus webpage:**
<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>
- **CDC Zika travel advisories:**
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>
- **CDC questions and answers, Zika virus infection and pregnancy:**
<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/question-answers.html>