



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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HEALTH AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER
AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY

SUBJECT: Zika Virus Information for Department of Defense Medical Personnel

This memorandum provides information for Department of Defense (DoD) medical and force health protection personnel concerning prevention, diagnoses, and treatment of Zika virus infection. Implementation of this guidance is essential to protect the health of our DoD personnel located in, traveling to, or returning from areas with active transmission of Zika virus.

Zika virus is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito. While there is a risk of sexual transmission, the predominant means of spread is through the *Aedes* mosquito. Infected individuals may experience fever, rash, conjunctivitis, and muscle and joint pain for a short period. Of particular concern is the association of Zika virus infection in pregnant women resulting in possible microcephaly in their newborn child. Another association is with Guillain-Barre Syndrome in infected individuals. There is no vaccine or medication available to prevent Zika virus infection.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), active Zika virus transmission is occurring primarily within the Americas (South America, Central America, Mexico, Caribbean), within the Oceania/Pacific Islands (American Samoa, Samoa, Tonga), and in Africa (Cape Verde). Local mosquito vector transmission of Zika virus has not been documented in the continental United States, but Zika virus infections have been reported in travelers returning to the United States. An updated list of Zika-virus-affected areas is maintained by the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>. The active transmission of Zika virus in these countries, combined with the known disease symptoms and potential serious health effects to newborns, necessitates prudent preventive measures to minimize the risk of exposure, infection, and disease progression.

It is important for all DoD health care providers to become familiar with the Zika virus so DoD personnel, especially pregnant women, can be appropriately counseled and medically evaluated for any signs and symptoms of Zika virus infection. The CDC issued Travel Health Notices for areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission and a Health Advisory on recognizing, managing, and reporting of Zika virus infections. In addition, the CDC prepared information on clinical evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment for Zika; Interim Guidelines for Pregnant Women During a Zika Virus Outbreak; Interim Guidelines for the Evaluation and Testing of Infants with Possible Congenital Zika Virus Infection; and guidelines for prevention of sexual transmission of

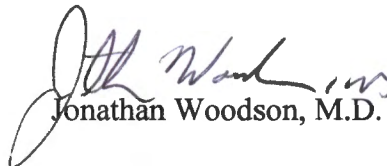
Zika virus. All of the information can be found on the CDC's Zika webpage, <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>. The CDC continues to update this site and all DoD health care providers should frequently re-visit this webpage to stay current of the latest developments.

At this time, DoD medical treatment facilities (MTF's) should contact their respective State public health laboratories to coordinate diagnostic testing of collected specimens. Specimens may be shipped to one of the State Public Health Laboratories that have diagnostic testing capability or to the CDC. The DoD is working closely with the CDC Laboratory Response Network's (LRN) staff to implement diagnostic testing within select DoD LRN-participating laboratories when an in vitro diagnostic device is available.

DoD MTFs will follow Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch (AFHSB) guidelines for reporting confirmed cases of Zika virus infection and disease. The reporting guidelines can be found on the AFHSB webpage, <https://www.afhsc.mil/>.

Equally important is the requirement that all DoD Components implement and sustain established comprehensive force health protection measures to reduce the mosquito population, avoid mosquito bites, and prevent infection. This includes health risk communication, mosquito surveillance and control, proper wear of clothing, use of insect repellents, bed nets, screening of living quarters, and use of permethrin-treated clothing. Approved insect repellents, including permethrin-treated clothing, are safe for use during pregnancy.

Additional medical guidance will be provided as needed to enable comprehensive, responsive, and highly effective medical care and disease prevention to our DoD personnel. My point of contact for this action is Mr. Steve Jones. He may be reached at (703) 681-7335 or steven.p.jones10.civ@mail.mil.


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cc:
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