

# Special Bulletin — Zika

From the Delaware Division of Public Health

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## Take travel precautions to prevent Zika virus infection

Zika is a generally mild illness currently widespread in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Anyone who lives or travels in the impacted areas could be infected regardless of whether they show symptoms. Only one in five people infected with the disease develop symptoms. However, there have been reports of serious birth defects linked to the disease, which is spread by mosquitoes.

Those who recently traveled or plan to travel to areas where Zika transmission is ongoing, including, but not limited to, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, U.S. Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama could be at risk. For the complete list of Caribbean, Central and South American, and African countries impacted, visit <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.

Because there is neither a vaccine nor antiviral medications available to prevent Zika virus infection, it is highly recommended for women that:

- If you are pregnant, postpone travel to the countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.
- If your male sexual partner has traveled to or lives in an area with active Zika virus transmission, condoms should be used for the duration of the pregnancy. Discuss your male partner's potential exposures and history of Zika-like illness with your doctor.
- If you are trying to become pregnant, talk to your doctor before you travel about your plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus.
- If you are pregnant or may become pregnant and must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip.
- If you are *not* pregnant, but your male partner lives in or has traveled to a country with Zika, consider using condoms.

### Zika Symptoms

Symptoms typically begin two to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are:

- Fever
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Joint pain
- Rash

## Screening and Reporting Potential Illnesses

All women who traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission during pregnancy should be evaluated specifically for Zika virus infection and tested in accordance with the CDC's latest guidance. And, everyone should be screened for travel-related infectious diseases using the link below.

Zika, and many other mosquito-borne illnesses are considered "mandatory reports," meaning they must be reported to the Division of Public Health (DPH). To report a potential illness or for further information on reporting, call the DPH Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 302-744-4990.

For further information and additional resources related to Zika, visit [www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/zika.html](http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/zika.html).

To screen patients for travel-related infectious diseases, health care providers should visit: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/php/files/emergingandtravelrelatedinfdisdiseasecreeningtool.pdf>

### Mosquito prevention strategies

- ☑ Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- ☑ Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- ☑ Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellents. All EPA-registered insect repellents are evaluated for effectiveness.
- ☑ If you have a baby or child:
  - Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
  - Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs, or cover crib, stroller, and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
  - Do not apply insect repellent onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth, and cut or irritated skin.
  - Adults: Spray insect repellent onto your hands and then apply to a child's face.
- ☑ Treat clothing and gear with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated items.
- ☑ Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are overseas or outside and not able to protect yourself from mosquitos.

