



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

*Larry Hogan, Governor - Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor - Van Mitchell, Secretary*

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**January 20, 2016**

## **Zika Virus Fact Sheet**

### **ORIGINS**

**Zika virus** is a virus spread through mosquito bites of *Aedes* species mosquitoes. *Aedes* mosquitoes also spread dengue and chikungunya viruses. Outbreaks of Zika virus disease have occurred in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. In May 2015, the first Zika virus infections were confirmed in Brazil. Zika virus is not currently found in the United States; however, cases of Zika virus disease have been reported in returning travelers. These imported cases may result in local spread of the virus in some areas of the United States.

### **TRANSMISSION**

#### *Through mosquito bites*

Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. These are the same mosquitoes that spread dengue and chikungunya viruses.

- These mosquitoes typically lay eggs in and near standing water in things like buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots and vases. They are aggressive DAYTIME biters, prefer to bite people, and live indoors and outdoors near people.
- Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites.

#### *Rarely, from mother to child*

- A mother already infected with Zika virus can pass on the virus to her newborn during pregnancy or around the time of birth. We do not know how often Zika virus is transmitted from mother to baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth.
- To date, there are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding, though the virus has been isolated from breast milk. Because of the benefits of breastfeeding, mothers are encouraged to breastfeed even in areas where Zika virus is found.

#### *Rarely, through infected blood or sexual contact*

- There has been at least one reported case of spread of the virus through blood transfusion.
- There has been one report of possible spread of the virus through sexual contact.

### **AREAS WITH ONGOING ZIKA VIRUS TRANSMISSION**

Because specific areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing are difficult to determine and likely to change over time, please refer to CDC's travel website (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>) for the most up to date information. As of January 19, 2016, the following countries have reported ongoing Zika virus transmission: Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Suriname, and Venezuela.

## **SYMPTOMS**

- About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become ill (i.e., develop Zika virus disease).
- The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain (mainly in the smaller joints of the hands and feet), or red eyes. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, pain behind the eyes, and vomiting.
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week (usually about 2-7 days).
- Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.
- To date, deaths due to Zika have not been reported during the current outbreak.

## **TREATMENT**

- There is no medicine or vaccine to treat Zika virus disease.
- Treat the symptoms:
  - Get plenty of rest.
  - Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
  - Take medicines, such as acetaminophen, to relieve fever and pain.
  - Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding.

## **RISK REDUCTION**

### *Protect yourself from mosquito bites*

- Use insect repellents:
  - Repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide long lasting protection.
  - If you use both sunscreen and insect repellent, apply the sunscreen first and then the repellent.
  - Do not spray insect repellent on the skin under your clothing.
  - Treat clothing with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing.
  - Always follow the label instructions when using insect repellent or sunscreen.
- When weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Use mosquito bed nets if accessible during your travels.
- Help reduce the number of mosquitoes inside and outside your home or hotel room by emptying standing water from containers such as flowerpots or buckets.

## **IF YOU HAVE ZIKA VIRUS DISEASE**

- During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be found in the blood and passed from an infected person to mosquitoes through mosquito bites. An infected mosquito can then spread the virus to other people.
- To help prevent others from getting sick, avoid mosquito bites during the first week of illness.

## **IF YOU ARE PREGNANT OR TRYING TO BECOME PREGNANT**

- Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to the areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.
- Pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant who plan to travel to one of these areas should talk to their healthcare provider first and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.
- It is safe for pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding to use insect repellent. They can and should choose an EPA-registered insect repellent and use it according to the product label.

## **ZIKA VIRUS AND MICROCEPHALY**

There have been reports of increased numbers of babies born with microcephaly (smaller than expected head size, sometimes with associated brain damage) in Brazil. Bear in mind the following:

### **1. There are many causes of microcephaly**

- There are many causes of microcephaly in babies (e.g., infections a mother can get during pregnancy, genetic abnormalities, exposure to toxic substances during pregnancy). Because of this, it will take time to determine the cause of microcephaly for the cases being reported in Brazil.

### **2. Microcephaly in Brazil**

- Starting in October 2015, the Brazilian MOH received reports of an increase in the number of babies being born with microcephaly.
- The number of microcephaly cases is roughly 10-20 times higher than what the country normally sees in a year.
- Some samples from babies with microcephaly have tested positive for Zika virus infection but several affected babies have also tested negative using the same test.

### **3. Zika virus in Brazil**

- Since the first case reported in May 2015, the virus has spread and has caused infections in many Brazilian states and other countries in Latin America.
- The association of Zika virus infection and microcephaly is still under investigation.