

Zika Virus

What is Zika Virus:

Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites.

Transmission of Zika Virus:

- **Infected Mosquitoes.** 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.
- **Rarely from Mother-to-Child.** A mother already infected with Zika virus near the time of delivery can pass on the virus to her newborn around the time of birth, but this is rare. It is possible that Zika virus could be passed from mother to fetus during pregnancy. This mode of transmission is being investigated. To date, there are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding.
- **Possibly through infected blood or sexual contact.** There has been one report of possible spread of the virus through blood transfusion and one report of possible spread of the virus through sexual contact.

What are Signs and Symptoms of Zika Virus:

The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for Zika virus disease is not known, but is likely to be a few days to a week. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. The Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for a few days but it can be found longer in some people.

- About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become ill (i.e., develop Zika).
- The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache.
- Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and deaths are rare.
- Researchers are currently studying the possibly link between Zika virus infection and microcephaly (a birth defect where a baby's head is much smaller than expected).

Prevention of Zika Virus:

The easiest and best way to avoid Zika virus is to prevent mosquito bites. No vaccine exists to prevent the virus.

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient. Follow the directions on the package.
- Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.

