

The Basics of Zika



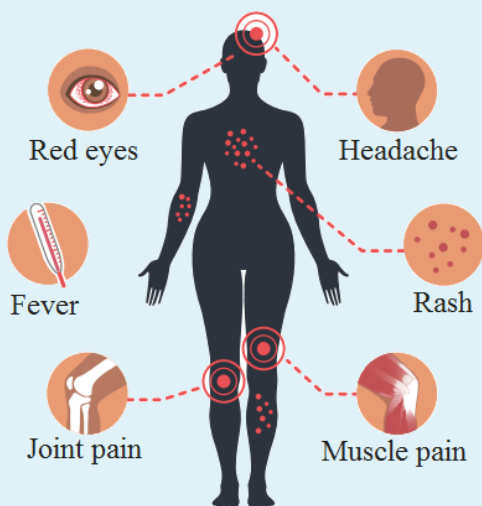
Current Zika Outbreak

Zika is spreading in many countries. The mosquitoes that can spread Zika live in many parts of the world, including parts of the United States.

Visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html> to find out where Zika is spreading.

Zika Symptoms

Many people infected with Zika won't have symptoms. For those who do, symptoms can last for several days to a week.



How Zika Spreads

- Zika can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus.
- Zika infection during pregnancy can cause birth defects.
- Zika is spread mostly by the bite of an infected mosquito.
- Zika can be passed through sex from a person who has Zika to his or her sex partners.
- There is no vaccine to prevent Zika. There is no medicine to treat Zika.

What Problems can Zika Cause?

Zika infection during pregnancy can cause fetuses to have abnormal brain development and smaller-than-normal brains, called microcephaly. Other problems have been detected such as defects of the eye, hearing problems, and growth problems. There have also been more cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare nervous system disorder, in areas with Zika.



Microcephaly

Zika and Sex

- Only people with sex partners who live in or traveled to an area with Zika are at risk for getting Zika through sex.
- The sex partner can have Zika even if they do not have symptoms at the time, or if their symptoms have gone away.
- After travel, women can pass Zika to a sex partner for up to 2 months, and men for up to 3 months.
- Sex includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex, and the sharing of sex toys.

Example of How Zika Can Spread

A man goes to Mexico to visit for two weeks. He gets mosquito bites after spending time outside. He returns home from his trip feeling healthy. He and his pregnant partner have sex. Several days later she visits her doctor who tests her for Zika virus because of her partner's trip. She tests positive. When their baby is born, the doctor finds the baby has problems with her eyes and hearing. These problems may have been caused by her mom's Zika virus infection during pregnancy.

4 Steps for Preventing Zika

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika. The best way to prevent it is to prevent mosquito bites.

1. Protective Clothing



- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Treat your clothing and gear with permethrin or buy pre-treated items.

2. Indoor Protection



- Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outside.

3. Mosquito Repellent



- Use EPA-registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, 2-undecanone, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-methane-diol.
- Always follow the product label instructions. When used as directed, these insect repellents are proven safe and effective even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- **For children younger than 3 years old** -- do not use products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol.
- **For babies younger than 2 months old** -- do not use insect repellents. Mosquito netting can be used to cover carriers, strollers, or cribs to protect babies from mosquito bites.

4. Protection During Sex



- Zika can spread during vaginal, anal, and oral sex, and from sharing of sex toys.
- Prevent sexual transmission of Zika by using protection, such as condoms, dental dams, or not having sex.
- **If your female partner traveled** -- use protection for at least 2 months after her travel.
- **If your male partner traveled** -- use protection for at least 3 months after his travel.
- **If you are pregnant and your partner traveled** -- Use a condom every time you have sex or do not have sex during your pregnancy. This is important, even if your partner does not have symptoms of Zika. If you think you may have been exposed, tell your healthcare provider.

Travelers should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks after returning from an area with Zika. This is because you can have Zika in your blood and a mosquito can bite you, get infected with Zika virus, and spread the virus to other people.

If you think you may have Zika, contact your medical provider.

