

Zika Virus



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Dallas County Health and Human Services

What is Zika virus? Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).

How does Zika virus spread? Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. The 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. 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. It is possible that Zika virus could be passed from mother to fetus during pregnancy.

Zika is an emerging virus. As of January 2016, there were no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding. Because of the benefits of breastfeeding, mothers are encouraged to breastfeed even in areas where Zika virus is found. As of January 2016, there was one report of possible spread of Zika virus through blood transfusion and one report of possible spread through sexual contact.

What are the symptoms of Zika virus? About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become ill (i.e., develop Zika). The most common symptoms of Zika virus are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. Deaths are rare. See your healthcare provider if you develop the symptoms and have visited an area where Zika virus is present. If you have recently traveled, tell your healthcare provider when and where.

How is Zika virus treated? No vaccine or medications are available to prevent or treat Zika infections.

Treat the symptoms:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Take medicines, such as acetaminophen or paracetamol, to relieve fever and pain.
- Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), like ibuprofen and naproxen, should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of hemorrhage. If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.

What should I do if I have Zika virus? If you have Zika virus, avoid mosquito bites for the first week of your illness.

- During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be found in the blood and passed from an infected person to another mosquito through mosquito bites.
- An infected mosquito can then spread the virus to other people.

The best way to avoid Zika virus is to avoid mosquito bites.

What can I do? Defend by using the 4Ds.

DEET All Day Every Day: Whenever you're outside, use insect repellents that contain DEET or other EPA approved repellents and follow instructions.

Dress: Wear long, loose and light-colored clothing outside.

Drain: Remove all standing water in and around your home.

Dusk & Dawn: Limit outdoor activities during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

In addition to the 4Ds, travelers can protect themselves by doing the following:

- Choose a hotel or lodging with air conditioning or screens on windows or doors.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are outside or in a room that is not well-screened.