



## **ZIKA VIRUS ADVISORY**

Zika virus is a mosquito-borne flavivirus that is spread primarily by the Aedes genus of mosquitoes, mainly the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which also spreads dengue virus, yellow fever virus and Chikungunya. Zika was reported in Brazil in May of 2015 and has since spread to over two dozen countries in the Americas. It is likely the virus will spread to other countries in the region. Zika is not spread directly from person to person by coughing or sneezing; a mosquito transmits the virus by biting an infected person and then biting another person. Zika can also be sexually transmitted through the semen of an infected person. Spread of the virus through blood transfusion has also been reported.

### **Symptoms**

Eighty percent of persons infected with the virus show no symptoms. Of those who do, symptoms are generally mild and can include acute onset of fever, raised red rash, joint pain, headache and conjunctivitis (pink-eye). Symptoms can last a few days to one week.

### **Pregnancy & Zika**

There has been a link between Zika virus and severe birth defects, specifically, microcephaly (small head and brain). More research is needed to determine how, and at what stage of pregnancy the damage occurs. ***Because of this risk, the CDC recommends pregnant women (or women who plan to become pregnant) postpone travel to any area with ongoing Zika virus transmission.*** If you are planning a trip and are unsure if you are pregnant, you should have a pregnancy test, as well as take precautions to avoid pregnancy while traveling.

### **Prevention**

Taking steps to avoid mosquito bites is the most effective way to prevent Zika virus infection and other mosquito-borne diseases. (See mosquito handout). Persons with symptoms should avoid being bitten to prevent the transmission to others. Men returning from Zika infected areas with no Zika symptoms should use condoms for eight weeks after leaving the affected area; six months if symptoms were or are present.

### **Testing and Treatment**

Currently, there is no commercially available or rapid test to diagnose Zika virus. In the U.S., testing is done at the CDC and must be ordered through local or state health departments. Returning travelers should consult a medical provider if flu-like symptoms develop within two weeks after returning home from a Zika infected area. Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya have similar symptoms and occur in the same regions. It is important to get a correct diagnosis for proper treatment and reporting. There is currently no vaccine or anti-viral drugs for Zika. Treatment is supportive and includes rest, fluids and fever reducing drugs such as Tylenol. Aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory NSAIDS such as Ibuprofen or naproxen should be avoided until a diagnosis is established.

Zika virus is an emerging travel related infection. Updates are occurring frequently.