

What is Zika Virus?

Zika virus (ZikV) is a mosquito-borne disease first identified in the 1940s and spread by the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. About 1 in 5 people infected with the virus will experience symptoms, including fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis.

Are there other effects of Zika?

Zika is linked to a serious birth defect, **microcephaly**, and complications for babies whose mothers contract the disease while pregnant. It is also linked to the **Guillain-Barre syndrome**, a rare disorder in which your body's immune system attacks your nerves. Weakness and tingling in your extremities are usually the first symptoms

How is Zika transmitted?

Zika is transmitted 5 known ways:

1. Mosquito to human
2. Human to mosquito
3. Man to woman, sexually
4. Mother to fetus
5. Blood transfusion

Zika has been shown in past outbreaks to be transmitted via blood transfusion. Such transmission has not been seen to date in this 2015-16 outbreak.

Can all mosquitoes carry Zika?

No. Only *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* are known to actively transmit Zika. They are found mostly in warmer climates and do not tolerate cold winters. In general, their populations decrease going north from the more tropical, seasonally warm southern tier of states.

What else is different about *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*?

They are called “container breeders” because they prefer to lay eggs in very small amounts of still water - as small as a bottle cap. They also like to be around people. In

fact, *Aedes aegypti* feed almost exclusively on humans and prefer to harbor indoors if you let them. That includes your garage, carport, sheds and other out buildings.

These species are also known as ‘day biters’. Unlike the mosquitoes that carry West Nile, these fellows are active during the day.

Are mosquitoes actively transmitting Zika in the United States?

No. At this time, the only Zika activity in the United States is limited to **traveler-imported cases** and their sexual partners. However, U.S. Territories like the Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and American Samoa are experiencing locally contracted Zika infections. This means the virus is present in the local population of *Aedes* mosquitoes.

What are traveler recommendations for Zika virus?

The CDC maintains current travel warnings for pregnant women planning to travel to areas (mostly in Central and South America) where Zika is actively being transmitted. Consult their website for more information. <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>

What type of mosquito control works best to control “container breeders”?

Treating container breeder mosquitoes requires new protocols and next generation products. Larvicide treatments (use of an EPA registered product to control mosquito larvae before they become adults) to standing water will help prevent eggs from hatching. But public health officials or abatement districts can’t effectively reach every back yard to do larviciding. That is why it is so important for homeowners to inspect their properties small, fresh water containers – from blown yard waste holding an ounce of water, to children’s toys, wheel barrow, bird baths, gutters, down spouts, rain barrels, sagging boat covers, etc. Eggs can hatch in a matter of just 3-4 days, so frequent inspection is important.

Because *Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus* are also more active during the day, it will be important for public mosquito control programs to suppress adult mosquito populations throughout the season. You may observe ultra-low volume spray applications being made early in the morning as well as just prior to sunset to more effectively control these species.

Is there a test for Zika virus?

For humans, yes. If anyone suspects they have Zika symptoms, they should see a health care provider and let them make a determination if a blood sample should be sent to a lab for testing. Labs that can test for the virus in mosquitoes are limited due to the method required.

Is there a vaccine for Zika virus?

No. At this time, there are no vaccines for the Zika virus. However, those who contract the disease are thought to have immunity after a period of time after exposure.

What can I do to protect my family from Zika virus?

- Avoid traveling to areas with active transmission of Zika virus.
- Tip and toss standing water from flowerpots, bird baths, yard trash, outdoor toys, kiddie pools, etc. every 3 days.
- Keep gutters and downspouts free of standing water.
- Treat uncovered rain barrels and still ornamental pools with a larvicide.
- Wear mosquito repellent as a matter of course each day, as mosquitoes that transmit Zika prefer to harbor indoors
- Repair screens and use air conditioning to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Allow inspections of your property by mosquito control agencies, if requested.

Is my area at risk for a Zika outbreak?

Because of a higher standard of living in the United States from overall cleanliness to use of air conditioning, experts are not predicting that Zika will get a strong foothold in the contiguous 48-states of the U.S. This is where traveler awareness and protection are so important along with everyone pitching in to keep their yards free of breeding sites.

Ae. aegypti mosquitoes are present in significant numbers in the southern half of the United States and along the coastline, though other areas have reported occasional *Ae. aegypti* mosquitoes in routine trapping. *Ae. albopictus* have a much greater presence in the U.S. For [current maps on distribution](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pdfs/zika-mosquito-maps.pdf) visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pdfs/zika-mosquito-maps.pdf>.