

## Zika Virus

### What is Zika disease?

Zika disease is an infectious disease caused by a virus in the same family as West Nile and Dengue, *Flavivirus* genus, transmitted to people through the bite of an infected insect vector, *Aedes* species mosquito.



### How do people get Zika disease?

People get infected in various ways. The main way Zika disease is transmitted is from the bite of infected *Aedes* mosquitoes. Once infected by biting a person who is sick, a mosquito can then bite healthy people and spread the infection.

Mosquitoes that can transmit the virus include the Yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, and the Asian Tiger mosquito, *Aedes albopictus*. These mosquitoes are abundant across Louisiana, breed in small containers and are active during the daytime (especially dawn and dusk). These mosquitoes are aggressive daytime biters and prefer to lay eggs in or near standing water. These mosquitoes are the same species that spread Dengue and Chikungunya, which can cause disease similar to Zika.

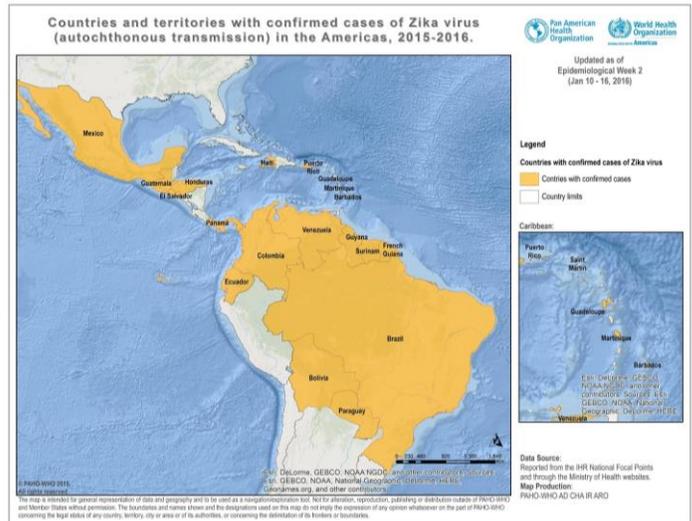
The virus is present in the blood, thus a potential risk exists for congenital transmission from a pregnant woman to her baby during pregnancy. Rarely a mother infected with Zika near the time of delivery can pass the virus on to the infant around the time of birth. Currently there are no reports of infants getting Zika through breastfeeding.

### Is Zika disease contagious person to person?

Zika disease is not commonly directly transmissible from person to person. However, infants can become infected through congenital transmission (from a pregnant woman to her baby). There has been one report of possible spread of the virus through blood transfusion and one report of possible spread through sexual contact.

### Where can Zika disease be found?

The virus was first isolated in 1947 from a rhesus monkey in the Zika Forest of Uganda. It has occurred since the 1950s within a narrow equatorial belt from Africa to Asia, causing about 15 documented cases until 2007. In 2007, there was an outbreak reported in Micronesia which spread to some other Pacific Islands in 2013-2014. In May 2015, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issued an alert regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infections in Brazil. Currently, outbreaks are occurring in many countries in the Americas. In December 2015, Puerto Rico reported its first locally transmitted confirmed Zika virus case.



Most cases of Zika disease in the U.S. are imported cases reported in returning travelers.

### Who is at risk in Louisiana?

Currently, while *Aedes* mosquitoes are common in Louisiana, there is no documentation of local mosquitoes being infected. The chance of getting Zika disease from a mosquito in the United States is low.

Travelers from Louisiana to areas of the world where Zika virus is found (including parts of Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Caribbean, Central and South America) should protect themselves from mosquito bites while traveling. For country-specific travel information and recommendations, visit [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

To date there have been no documented infections imported or local transmission in Louisiana residents.

### What is an imported case compared to a local case?

An imported case is a person who was bitten by an infected mosquito while traveling away from home. Symptoms may begin 3-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Other mosquitoes can bite the sick person and become infected and bite more people.

Local transmission occurs when a person who has not traveled recently and gets bitten by an infected mosquito where they live, work or play.

There has been no local transmission of Zika in the U.S.

### What should I do if I think I have been exposed to Zika disease?

Symptoms usually begin 2-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Not all persons bitten by an infected mosquito will develop symptoms. 80% of people will remain asymptomatic and never know they were infected. About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika will become ill.

See a doctor if you develop a fever AND any of the following symptoms after a potential exposure to Zika virus:

- Muscle or joint pain
- Headache, especially behind the eyes
- Rash
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Vomiting

### What should I do if I think I have Zika disease?

You should discuss your concerns with your health care provider, who will examine you and ask you questions (for example, about your health and where you have traveled within 2 weeks before getting sick). Zika disease is diagnosed by testing blood, spinal fluid or tissue.

The symptoms of Zika are similar to those of Dengue and Chikungunya. Your healthcare provider may order tests for those diseases or other similar viruses.

You should protect yourself from mosquito bites in Louisiana during the first 7 days of illness. If a mosquito bites you, it can become infected and spread the virus to others nearby.

### How is Zika disease treated?

There is only symptomatic treatment to manage the symptoms and signs of infection. Symptoms typically resolve within several days to one week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and death is rare.

### Prevention

No drugs or vaccines for preventing infection are currently available.

The best prevention strategy is to protect yourself from mosquito bites

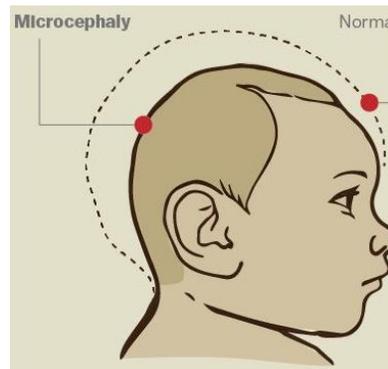
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants or permethrin-treated clothing
- Use door and window screens in good repair to keep mosquitoes outside
- Empty standing water and scrub, turn over, cover or throw out items that can hold water around your home (including tires, buckets, planters, toys, trash, and gutters)
- Use insect repellent (containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535 and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products). [More information about insect repellents can be found on the CDC West Nile virus website, "Insect Repellent Use & Safety"](#).

### What is the risk to pregnant women?

Pregnant women can be infected with Zika virus in any trimester. The incidence of Zika virus infection in pregnant women is not currently known, and data on pregnant women infected with Zika virus are limited. We do not know how often Zika is transmitted from mother to baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth.

No evidence exists to suggest that pregnant women are more susceptible to Zika virus infection or experience more severe disease during pregnancy.

Zika virus infections have been confirmed in infants with microcephaly, and in the current outbreak in Brazil, a significant increase in the number of infants born with microcephaly (a birth defect where a baby's head is smaller than normal), has been reported.



Because there is neither a vaccine nor prophylactic medications available to prevent Zika virus infection, CDC recommends that all pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.

Testing is not indicated for women without a travel history to an area with Zika virus transmission.

### Is it safe to use an insect repellent if I am pregnant or nursing?

Using an insect repellent is safe and effective. Pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding can and should choose an EPA-registered insect repellent and use it according to the product label.

### If a woman who is not pregnant is bitten by a mosquito and infected with Zika virus, will her future pregnancies be at risk?

We do not know the risk to the baby if a woman is infected with Zika virus while she is pregnant. However, Zika virus infection does not pose a risk of birth defects for future pregnancies. Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for only a few days to a week. The virus will not cause infections in a baby that is conceived after the virus is cleared from the blood.