



Frequently Asked Questions: Zika Virus

Q: What is Zika virus disease (Zika)?

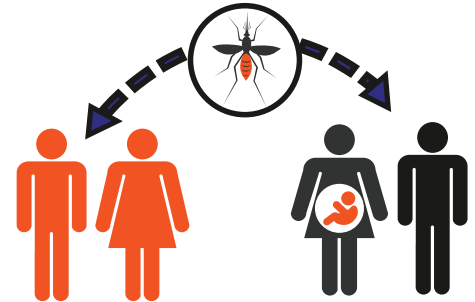
A: Zika is a generally mild illness. Symptoms typically last for several days to a week.

Q: What are the symptoms of Zika?

A: The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Symptoms typically begin two to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. About one in five people infected with Zika will get sick.

Q: How is Zika transmitted?

A: Zika is primarily transmitted through mosquito bite when the mosquito bites a person already infected with the virus and then bites someone else. The virus also can be spread during sexual activity by a male or female partner. There is no evidence that Zika can be spread through casual contact like kissing, hugging, etc. The virus can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth. We do not know how often Zika is transmitted from mother to baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth.



Q: Who is at risk of being infected?

A: Anyone who is living in, or traveling to, an area where Zika virus transmission is currently occurring, or men and women who have sexual partners who have traveled to these areas.

Q: What major health problems are linked to Zika?

A: Zika is generally a mild illness. There have been very few reports of potential links to Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS); however, it is not yet known if Zika virus infection causes GBS. The largest health impact of the Zika virus appears to be on infants whose mother was infected during pregnancy. There have been reports of a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly, a condition in which a baby's head is smaller than expected when compared to babies of the same sex and age, as well as other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant.

Q: What are the travel recommendations related to Zika virus?

A: Women who are pregnant are advised to postpone travel to the areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Women, and their partners, who are trying to become pregnant should talk to their doctor before they travel about their plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus. If a woman who is pregnant or may become pregnant must travel to one of these areas, she should talk to her doctor first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites and sexual transmission of Zika during her trip. Women who traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission up to eight weeks before their pregnancy was confirmed should discuss their travel history with their doctor.

Q: What are the recommendations to avoid sexual transmission of Zika if I am, or am trying to become, pregnant?

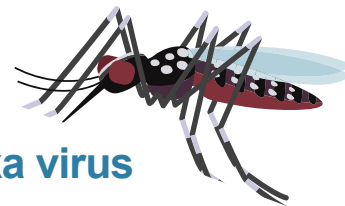
A: Women who are pregnant whose male or female sexual partner has traveled to, or lives in, an area with active Zika virus transmission are advised to use barrier methods every time they have sex or they should not have sex during the duration of the pregnancy. Condoms and/or dental dams should be used during oral sex and condoms should be used for sex involving penetration. Discuss your and your partner's potential exposures and history of Zika-like illness with your doctor.

Women who have had possible Zika virus exposure through travel or sexual contact, regardless of whether or not they have had symptoms, should wait at least eight weeks before trying to get pregnant in order to minimize risk. Men with possible Zika virus exposure through travel or sexual contact should wait at least six months before attempting conception with their partner.

Q: What are the recommendations to avoid sexual transmission of Zika if pregnancy is not a factor?

A: Men and women may transmit Zika during sexual activity. Couples that include at least one partner who had possible Zika virus exposure through travel or sexual contact should use condoms and/or dental dams correctly and consistently for at least six months for men and eight weeks for women. Preventing Zika transmission to a woman who may, or is planning to, conceive in the next few months is particularly important.





Delaware Mosquito Control:

What residents need to know about mosquitoes and Zika virus

Q: Is the mosquito species that carries the Zika virus, *Aedes aegypti*, found in Delaware? What other mosquito species found in Delaware could carry the Zika virus?

A: Rarely. In the United States, these mosquitoes are common only as far north as South Carolina. *Aedes albopictus*, the invasive Asian tiger mosquito, is a common backyard biting mosquito in Delaware. Asian tiger mosquitoes are related to the primary Zika carrier, *Aedes aegypti*, and have already been documented as a Zika carrier in Africa. Asian tiger mosquitoes also carry West Nile in the U.S., including Delaware.

Q: What can be done to reduce the number of backyard mosquitoes that could carry the Zika virus?

A: During mosquito season, residents are strongly encouraged to reduce backyard mosquito-producing habitat by cleaning clogged rain gutters, draining abandoned swimming pools and most importantly emptying standing water from any and all containers such as scrap tires, cans, flower pot liners, unused water cisterns, upright wheelbarrows, uncovered trash cans, depressions in tarps covering boats or other objects stored outside. Water in birdbaths or outdoor pet dishes should be changed often.

Q: What should I do to prevent mosquito bites if I am spending long periods outdoors?

A: The best way to prevent mosquito bites is to use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered insect repellents; stay in places with air conditioning or that use window or door screens to keep mosquitoes outside; sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are outside and not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes; treat clothing and gear with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated items; and wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

Q: How are mosquitoes that can carry Zika monitored and identified in Delaware?

A: DNREC's Mosquito Control monitors adult mosquitoes via a statewide network of light trap monitoring stations, sampled twice or more weekly from about mid-May to late September. Mosquito Control also can collect and identify adult mosquitoes while performing adult landing rate counts.

Q: What's done in Delaware to reduce mosquito populations that could transmit disease?

A: Mosquito Control uses EPA-approved insecticides that pose no unreasonable risks to human health, wildlife or the environment. These are applied by aircraft over larger areas and by truck to neighborhoods reporting intolerable numbers of biting mosquitoes. If *Aedes aegypti* becomes established in Delaware, or if Zika is found in local mosquito populations, DNREC's Mosquito Control will use a combination of larvicide and adulticide along with promoting good water sanitation to treat affected areas. Due to certain adult behaviors and where they deposit their eggs, Asian tiger mosquitoes can be difficult to control with insecticides alone, making the elimination of standing water to reduce larvae habitat even more important.

Q: How can residents contact Delaware Mosquito Control to report intolerable numbers of biting mosquitoes in their neighborhood?

A: Call Mosquito Control's field offices between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday:

- New Castle County and northern Kent County from Dover north, call 302-836-2555.
- Remainder of southern Kent County and all of Sussex County, call 302-422-1512.

For more information about mosquitoes in Delaware, call 302-739-9917, or visit www.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/mosquito/Pages/MC-Diseases.aspx.

