



# Zika Virus

The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued several health alerts related to the Zika virus in the US, Caribbean, South America, Central America, Samoa, Cape Verde and Mexico. The alerts urge travelers to practice enhanced precautions in these areas due to the recent increase in reported cases of Zika.

For women who are pregnant at any stage or are trying to become pregnant, the CDC recommends postponing trips to this area, if possible, because the virus can be spread from pregnant women to unborn babies. Reports have linked the infection with the virus during pregnancy to serious birth defects in babies, such as microcephaly—reduced size of the brain.

The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for the Zika virus disease is not known, but is likely to be a few days to a week. The virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for a few days, but it can be found longer in some people.

The official CDC Level 2 Advisory applies to:

- Puerto Rico
- Mexico
- Central America
- South America – including Brazil

Countries and territories with active Zika Virus transmission are:

- Barbados
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Colombia
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- French Guiana
- Guadeloupe
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Martinique
- Mexico
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Puerto Rico
- Saint Martin
- Suriname
- Venezuela
- Samoa
- Cape Verde

Prior to 2015, Zika Virus outbreaks had occurred in the areas of Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands

## How does the Zika Virus Spread?

Zika is an illness caused by a virus transmitted by the Aedes mosquito (this mosquito also transmits Dengue and Chikungunya).

## Signs and Symptoms

Common symptoms include the following:

- Fever
- Joint pains
- Rash
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Headache
- Muscle aches

## Preventive Measures

Because there is no vaccine or prophylactic medication available to prevent the Zika virus infection, the CDC recommends that all pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas where the Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Mosquitoes that spread the Zika virus bite both indoors and outdoors, mostly during the daytime; therefore, it is important to ensure protection from mosquitoes throughout the entire day. If a pregnant woman travels to an area with the Zika virus transmission, she is advised to strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites, such as the following measures on the CDC website:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitos outside.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents. All EPA registered insect repellents are evaluated for effectiveness.
  - » Always follow the product label instructions.
  - » Reapply insect repellent as directed.
  - » Do not spray repellent on the skin under clothing.
  - » If you are also using sunscreen, apply sunscreen before applying insect repellent.
  - » Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
  - » Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs.
  - » Cover crib, stroller and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
  - » Do not apply insect repellent onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth and cut or irritated skin.
  - » Adults: Spray insect repellent onto your hands and then apply to a child's face.
- Treat clothing and gear with permethrin or purchase permethrintreated items.
  - » Treated clothing remains protective after multiple washings. See product information to learn how long the protection will last.
  - » If treating items yourself, follow the product instructions carefully.
  - » Do NOT use permethrin products directly on skin. They are intended to treat clothing.

Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are overseas or outside and are not able to protect yourself from mosquito bites. If you think you may be pregnant and may have been exposed through travel and have any of the symptoms, you should see your doctor immediately.

**For more information please visit:**

[www.cdc.gov/zika/](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/)