



ZIKA VIRUS FACT SHEET



Zika virus is currently spreading through Central and South America and causes a mild illness that lasts for up to a week. Approximately 80% of people infected with the virus do not become ill. The biggest concern is the virus's association with microcephaly – a neurological development problem causing small heads; however, this connection is still being studied.

TRANSMISSION

- Primary through infected *Aedes* mosquitoes. They are aggressive daytime biters and live indoors and outdoors, usually near people.
- It is possible that Zika virus could be passed from mother to fetus during pregnancy.
- Zika virus is also transmitted sexually and may remain in body fluids for up to two months.

SYMPTOMS

- Fever, Rash, Joint pain, Headache, and Conjunctivitis (red eyes).

AFFECTED AREAS

- Cases have been reported in individuals who have recently traveled to South or Central America.
- Outbreaks are occurring in many countries throughout Central and South America; the CDC publishes up-to-date travel alerts on their website.
- Zika virus continues to spread, and mosquitoes have the potential to spread the virus locally.

DIAGNOSIS

Your physician may request a laboratory test through the City of Houston public health laboratory; there are no rapid tests for the virus available.

TREATMENT

- Zika virus disease is usually relatively mild.
- There is no specific treatment for Zika.
- Persons who believe they are ill with Zika should seek medical attention. People sick with Zika virus should get plenty of rest and drink enough fluids.
- Prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks to prevent spreading the virus.

Prevention

- No vaccine exists to prevent Zika virus disease.
- Preventing Zika requires avoiding mosquito bites:
 - Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants
 - Use EPA-approved insect repellent
 - Use door and window screens to keep mosquitoes outside
- Pregnant women should postpone travel to areas affected by Zika.
- Because Zika may be transmitted sexually, it is important to use condoms during intercourse for those who have been diagnosed.



HOUSTON HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

