



Zika Virus Fact Sheet

What is Zika?

Zika is a disease caused by Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week.

How is Zika Virus Spread?

Zika is primarily transmitted through the bite of infected *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, the same mosquitoes that spread Chikungunya and dengue. If a mother is infected during pregnancy, it can be passed from mother to child. Zika may be passed through infected blood and sexual contact. Zika virus transmission is ongoing in several parts of the world. Please visit the CDC Travelers' Health site for the most updated information.

Who is at risk of being infected?

Anyone who is living in or traveling to an area where Zika virus is found who has not already been infected with Zika virus is at risk for infection, including pregnant women. It is recommended that women who are pregnant (in any trimester) consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip. Women who are trying to become pregnant should talk to their doctor about their plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus infection. Strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip. All other travelers should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites. CDC has issued Level 2 Alerts to Zika-affected areas advising travelers to take measures to prevent mosquito bites. A Level 2 alert means there is increased risk for Zika infection in countries where Zika has been identified. Individuals may wish to delay travel to these destinations.

Can Iowans get Zika?

The *Aedes* mosquitoes that are transmitting Zika virus in other areas of the world are present in many tropical and subtropical environments, and are not established in Iowa, so the risk to Iowans occurs when they travel to Zika-affected areas. Mosquito spraying to eliminate the potential threat of Zika is not recommended in Iowa. Iowans should follow the travel recommendations for pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant. All other travelers should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites.

Does Zika Virus Cause Birth Defects?

There is evidence that Zika infection can cause 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) and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. Knowledge of the link between Zika and these outcomes is evolving, but until more is known, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend special precautions for the following groups:

- Women who are pregnant (in any trimester):
 - Consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.

- If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip.
- Women who are trying to become pregnant:
 - Before you travel, talk to your doctor about your plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus infection.

Strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip.

What can people do to prevent becoming infected with Zika?

Currently, there is no vaccine for Zika virus disease, nor is there a medication to take to prevent Zika virus disease. When traveling to areas where Zika virus is prevalent, it is important to protect yourself from being bitten by mosquitoes. Here's how:

Steps to Prevent Mosquito Bites:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are overseas or outside and are not able to protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- 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.
- If you have a baby or child:
 - Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
 - Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs, or
 - 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 permethrin-treated 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.

Can I get tested for Zika?

Contact your healthcare provider to discuss whether testing is appropriate. Healthcare providers suspecting a potential case of Zika virus should contact the Iowa Department of Public Health's Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology at 800-362-2736. CADE staff will consult with the provider to determine whether the case meets the CDC testing criteria. If testing is warranted, CADE staff will work with the provider to determine which specimens to collect and make arrangements for the courier to pick up collected specimens and deliver them to the State Hygienic Laboratory (the state's public health laboratory).

For more information regarding the Zika virus please visit:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

The Iowa Department of Public Health at <https://idph.iowa.gov/ehi/zika>