

# Zika: What You Need to Know

Zika is a virus that can be spread by a certain type of mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*). It can also be spread from person to person through sex.

Zika is a serious concern especially for people who are or could become pregnant and their partners, because Zika can harm the baby. Potential birth defects include microcephaly (having an abnormally small head and, in some cases, serious problems with brain development).

**What are the symptoms of Zika?** Many people infected with Zika have no symptoms or mild symptoms that may include fever, headache, red eyes, rash, and joint pain.

## What if I may have been exposed to Zika?

- **Men** who could cause a pregnancy should:
  - Use condoms during sex.
  - Not have sex for at least 6 months after symptoms start (if you have symptoms) or after the last possible exposure (if you don't).
- **Women** who could become pregnant should:
  - Use condoms during sex.
  - Not have sex for at least 8 weeks after symptoms start (if you have symptoms) or after the last possible exposure (if you don't).



**What if I am pregnant?** Zika can cause serious problems if you are pregnant. If you recently traveled to one of the areas where there is Zika or have had unprotected sex with anyone who might have Zika, tell your health care provider. It is also important to use condoms, or not have sex, for the rest of the pregnancy, even if you and your partner have no symptoms.

**Can I prevent Zika?** Yes. The best way to prevent Zika virus is to avoid the mosquitoes that carry it and avoid unprotected sex by using effective birth control and condoms.

**Where is Zika found?** Most cases have been in the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and the Pacific Islands. There have also been outbreaks in South Florida. For updated information visit:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO): [www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus](http://www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus)

## What should I do if I am traveling to a place with Zika?

- People who could become pregnant or cause a pregnancy should use condoms and an effective method of birth control. You can get both from a health care provider.
- Drain standing water where mosquitoes could breed, such as wading pools.
- Stay inside screened or air conditioned spaces.
- Wear shoes, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat when you go outside.
- Wear bug spray that contains DEET or the chemical *picaridin* and spray your clothes with bug repellent that has the chemical *permethrin*.



**How is Zika treated?** There is no specific treatment for Zika virus, but there are things to do to relieve the symptoms. If you have symptoms, you should visit a health care provider.

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[www.actforyouth.net/resources/n/zika-handout.pdf](http://www.actforyouth.net/resources/n/zika-handout.pdf)