

Zika Virus Facts:

On February 1st 2016 the World Health Organization declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern after a substantial spike in cases of microcephaly and Guillain-Barré syndrome in the Americas. These cases are strongly suspected to be linked to Zika virus, a mosquito transmitted disease that has spread to more than 25 countries and territories in the region.

Key facts

- Zika virus disease is caused by a virus transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes.
- People with Zika virus disease usually have a mild fever, skin rash (exanthema) and conjunctivitis. These symptoms normally last for 2-7 days.
- There is no specific treatment or vaccine currently available.
- The best form of prevention is protection against mosquito bites.
- The virus is known to circulate in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific

Signs and Symptoms

The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) of Zika virus disease is not clear, but is likely to be a few days. The symptoms include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache. These symptoms are usually mild and last for 2-7 days.

Approximately 80% of people infected with the virus do not become ill. For those who do develop symptoms, illness is generally mild and typically lasts a few days to a week. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).

Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and fatalities are rare. An increase in Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare nerve disorder, was noted during an outbreak of Zika virus in French Polynesia in 2014. An increase in microcephaly, a congenital condition associated with incomplete brain development and abnormal smallness of the head, was noted during an outbreak of Zika virus in Brazil in 2015. Whether Zika virus infection causes these conditions has not yet been established

Transmission

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Zika virus is primarily spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito from the *Aedes* genus, mainly *Aedes aegypti*. This is the same mosquito that transmits dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever. Rarely, the virus is spread from mother to child. Spreads of the virus through blood transfusion and sexual contact have also been reported. Zika virus disease outbreaks were reported for the first time from the Pacific in 2007 and 2013 and in 2015 from the

Americas (Brazil and Colombia) and Africa (Cape Verde). In addition, more than 13 countries in the Americas have reported sporadic Zika virus infections indicating rapid geographic expansion of Zika virus.

Prevention

Mosquitoes and their breeding sites pose a significant risk factor for Zika virus infection. Prevention and control relies on reducing mosquitoes through source reduction (removal and modification of breeding sites) and reducing contact between mosquitoes and people. This can be done by using insect repellent; wearing clothes (preferably light-colored) that cover as much of the body as possible; using physical barriers such as screens, closed doors and windows; and sleeping under mosquito nets. It is also important to empty, clean or cover containers that can hold water such as buckets, flower pots or tires, so that places where mosquitoes can breed are removed.

Special attention and help should be given to those who may not be able to protect themselves adequately, such as young children, the sick or elderly.

Treatment

Zika virus disease is usually relatively mild and requires no specific treatment. People sick with Zika virus should get plenty of rest, drink enough fluids, and treat pain and fever with common medicines. If symptoms worsen, they should seek medical care and advice.

Laboratory testing for Zika virus infection is available at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Healthcare providers should contact their state or local health department to facilitate laboratory testing in symptomatic patients. There are currently no vaccines or drugs to prevent or treat Zika virus infection. To help prevent infection, DSHS recommends that:

- Travelers to [areas affected by Zika](#) | [avoid mosquito exposure](#)
- Pregnant women postpone travel to [areas affected by Zika](#)

It is not yet known if people with Zika who do not have symptoms can transmit the virus to Texas mosquitoes. Therefore, DSHS recommends that all travelers returning to Texas from [areas affected by Zika](#) avoid mosquito bites for one week following return or following onset of illness.

Links for more information:

Where has the virus been found- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/>

How can it be transmitted- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/transmission/index.html>

Prevention- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/index.html>

Symptoms, Diagnosis, & Treatment- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/symptoms/index.html>

What is Zika Virus- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

Information for pregnant women- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/index.html>

For Health Care Providers- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/index.html>

Spanish Version- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pdfs/preg-ga-hcp-spanish.pdf>

Mosquito Life Cycle- <http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/resources/factSheets/MosquitoLifecyleFINAL.pdf>