

ZIKA VIRUS FACTSHEET

WHAT IS ZIKA VIRUS?

Zika virus is a disease that is spread by the bite of infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. It was first discovered in 1947 in the Zika forest of Uganda. The first human cases of Zika were in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Pacific Islands in 1950s. Recently, the majority of cases have been found in South America and Mexico (CDC, 2016).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ZIKA VIRUS?

Common symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. The symptoms are usually mild and can last from a few days to a week after having bitten by an infected mosquito. Many people who are infected may not experience the symptoms associated with the Zika virus. Among those who do experience the symptoms, these symptoms are mild and most people do not go to the hospital for them. The most vulnerable population is pregnant women because the Zika is known to cause serious birth defects (CDC, 2016).



ZIKA VIRUS AND PREGNANCY

Zika virus infection poses a significant threat among pregnant women. The virus can cause serious birth defects to the fetus. Recent reports indicate that a brain defect called microcephaly has been linked to Zika infection in South American regions. Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby's head is unusually small because of abnormal brain development (Mayo Clinic, 2016). Other problems such as eye defects, hearing deficits, and impaired growth are also attributed to the Zika infection. Other reports link the virus to a nervous system defect called Guillain-Barre syndrome, which can cause muscle weakness and paralysis in some cases (CDC, 2016).

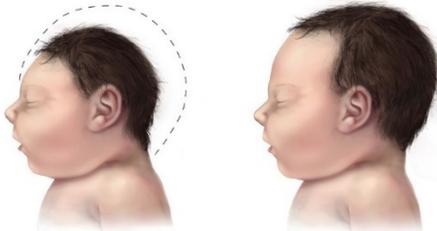


Image of microcephaly

TRANSMISSION OF ZIKA

Zika virus can spread from infected mosquitoes to humans. It can also spread from infected humans back to other mosquitoes that bite them. Zika virus can also spread during sex with an infected man or woman, from a pregnant woman to her fetus during pregnancy, and from a blood transfusion (CDC, 2016).

ZIKA CASES IN MARYLAND

As of August 10, 2016, there have been 54 reported travel associated cases and 0 locally acquired cases of Zika in Maryland. There are also 6 travel associated cases in the District of Columbia and 18 in Virginia. So far, there are 6 locally acquired cases in Florida (CDC, 2016). Puerto Rico has over 5,000 locally acquired cases which makes up the majority of all locally acquired cases for US territories.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Prevent mosquito bites
 - Wear long sleeves and long pants
 - Use EPA registered insect repellants
 - Remove standing water
 - Use mosquito nets to cover babies
 - Sleep in air conditioned areas
- Prevent sexual transmission
 - Use condoms
 - Abstain from unprotected sexual activity



TREATMENT/VACCINE

Currently, the vaccine for the Zika virus is unavailable. The National Institute of Health announced that the Zika vaccine should be available in the fall of 2016 (NIH 2016). If you believe you have been exposed to the Zika virus, contact your health care provider. You can treat the symptoms associated with the disease by getting rest, staying hydrated, and using drugs recommended by your provider. The use of aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs should be avoided until one confirms the absence of dengue in the body.