

# PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

## Zika Virus



### Burlington County Health Department

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**Public Health**  
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Burlington County Health Department  
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### What is Zika Virus (Zika)?

Zika virus is most commonly spread by infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the same mosquito that transmits dengue and chikungunya. The illness usually has mild symptoms, lasting up to a week. However, Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause a severe birth defect called **microcephaly** and other severe brain defects.

### What are the symptoms of Zika?

About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika become physically ill, with symptoms showing up 3-12 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain or conjunctivitis (pink eye). Other symptoms include muscle pain and headache. **Please see your healthcare provider if you are pregnant and develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or pink eyes within two weeks after traveling to a place where Zika has been reported.** The illness is usually mild, and lasts about a week. Zika can remain in the blood for a while after you get better. Most people do not get sick enough to go to the hospital, and very rarely die of Zika.

### Is there treatment for Zika?

There is no treatment or vaccine for Zika. People who are ill get supportive treatments: plenty of rest and fluids; acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for fever and pain relief. **Do not take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID).** If you have Zika, it is important to prevent mosquito bites for the first week of your illness.

### How is Zika spread?

Zika needs a vector (a means of transportation) to infect people; generally, that vector is a mosquito. However, Zika has been found in semen and person-to-person sexual transmission has been documented. If you have Zika, avoid mosquito bites for the first week of your illness. Mosquitoes that bite people who are experiencing symptoms can become infected and pass on Zika to others.

### What can you do to protect yourself?

No vaccine or preventative drug is available at this time. The best way to prevent Zika is to avoid mosquito bites when traveling to an area where Zika is present.

- Use insect repellent with DEET, picaridin IR3535 and oil of lemon eucalyptus PMD provide long last protection against mosquitos that transmit viruses like Zika, dengue and chikungunya.
- When indoors, use air conditioning, window screens or insecticide treated mosquito netting to keep mosquitos out of the home.
- Reduce the number of mosquitos outside the home or hotel by frequently emptying free-standing water from flower pots, pet dishes, bird baths, etc.

### **What is the risk of Zika in Pregnancy?**

Zika can be spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby. There have been reports of a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika while pregnant. Until more is known about the link between Zika and these outcomes, the CDC recommends the following precautions:

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.
- Strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip.

### **Where can I get more information?**

- Your primary care provider
- The Burlington County Health Department at (609)265-5548 or [www.co.burlington.nj.us/health](http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/health)
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika>
- The New Jersey Department of Health <http://www.nj.gov/health/zika>

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