

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS



What is Zika virus?

- Zika is a virus that is mainly spread by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. These mosquitoes are not usually found in Missouri.
- Zika virus has been found in areas of Florida and Texas in the United States, and countries ranging from Mexico into the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. A complete listing of countries with Zika virus transmission can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/active-countries.html>.

How is Zika virus spread?

- The virus is mostly spread to people when they are bitten by an infected mosquito.
- Zika virus can also be spread through unprotected sexual intercourse, and it can spread from a pregnant woman to her baby.

What are the symptoms of Zika virus disease?

- Most people (80%) who are exposed to Zika virus will not experience symptoms or get sick. If they do get sick, symptoms are usually mild, lasting for several days to a week. Symptoms will appear within one to two weeks after being bitten.
- When symptoms occur, they include: fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).

Can I get Zika virus from mosquitoes in Missouri?

- It is unlikely that anyone could become infected with Zika virus from a mosquito bite in Missouri. The main type of mosquito that is known for spreading Zika, *A. aegypti*, is generally not found in Missouri.
- All of the reported Zika virus cases in Missouri have been linked to travel to an area with active Zika virus transmission.
- Surveys are being conducted to find out whether the types of mosquitoes found in Missouri can carry and spread Zika virus.

What do I need to know about Zika virus if I am pregnant?

- In pregnant women who have been exposed to Zika virus, it is possible for the virus to spread to the baby. Infection may result in a birth defect called microcephaly, which is abnormal brain and head development.
- It is recommended that pregnant women avoid travel to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission.
- If you are pregnant and you or your sex partner have traveled to an area with Zika virus transmission, use condoms every time you have sex or avoid sex during your pregnancy.

What do I need to know about Zika virus if I am trying to become pregnant?

- It is recommended that couples who are trying to become pregnant avoid travel to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission.
- If you are trying to become pregnant and have been potentially exposed to Zika virus through travel or sexual activity, the CDC has provided suggested time periods to wait before becoming pregnant. For more information, talk with your doctor.

	Women	Men
Zika symptoms present	Wait at least 8 weeks after symptoms start	Wait at least 6 months after symptoms start
No Zika symptoms	Wait at least 8 weeks after exposure	Wait at least 6 months after exposure

How can I avoid Zika virus?

- There is no vaccine or medication to prevent Zika virus infection. The best way to avoid Zika virus is to avoid travel to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission.
- If travel to an active Zika area is not avoidable, take steps to prevent mosquito bites. This includes:
 - Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants to reduce the amount of exposed skin.
 - Using insect repellent that contains an EPA-registered ingredient such as DEET, picaridin, IR3535, lemon oil eucalyptus, or 2-undecanone. These ingredients have proven safe and effective, **even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.**
 - When possible, stay in places that have air conditioning or window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Mosquitoes that spread Zika virus are active during the day and night.
- Zika virus can be transmitted sexually. Pregnant women and others who wish to avoid Zika virus should avoid sexual intercourse or use condoms during vaginal, anal, or oral sex with partners who reside in or traveled to an area with Zika virus transmission.

Where can I get more information?

- Your health care provider or your local public health department.
- The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Zika website, <http://health.mo.gov/mosquitoes>.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Zika website, <http://www.cdc.gov/zika>.

Please contact your doctor if you or your sexual partner recently visited an area with Zika virus transmission and:

- You are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- You believe you are experiencing symptoms related to Zika virus.

