Zika Virus

Office of Health Affairs

HealthAffairs@hq.dhs.gov Follow OHA on Twitter! @DHSHealth1

Since mid-2015, Zika virus has spread rapidly throughout South and Central America and the Caribbean, including U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In July 2016, Florida became the first U.S. state to report local mosquito-borne transmission of the Zika virus.

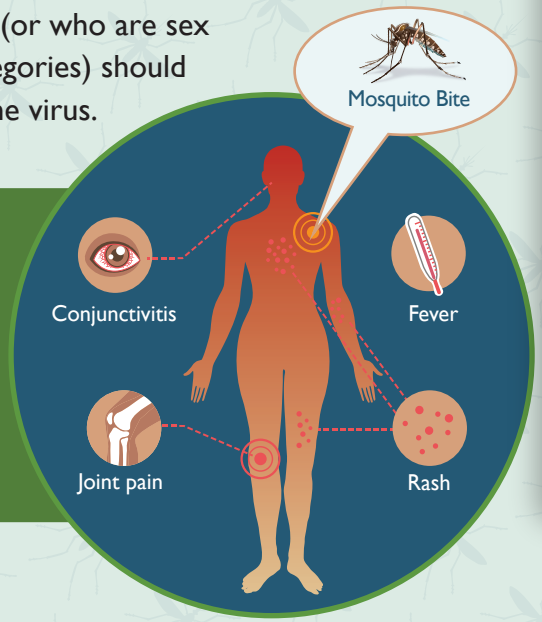
How Does Zika Virus Spread?

Zika virus spreads to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*). Zika can also be passed through sex from a person who has Zika to his or her sex partner and it can be spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus.

Risk to the DHS Workforce

Zika infections are generally mild and only 1 in 5 people with Zika will show signs or symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes. However, Zika infections have also been linked to severe birth defects. Therefore, employees who are pregnant or attempting to become pregnant (or who are sex partners of women in these categories) should take extra precautions against the virus.

Even if you do not feel sick, if you have traveled to a Zika-affected country (on or off duty), please use mosquito-bite preventive measures for 3 weeks after returning to help prevent the spread of Zika in the United States.



Protect Yourself from Zika Virus

Know Where Zika is Spreading:

- For the most up-to-date list of locations where Zika is spreading, please see: *http://www.cdc.gov/ZIKA/geo/index.html.* The CDC recommends that pregnant women avoid travel to areas with active Zika transmission. Partners of pregnant women should also be aware that Zika can be sexually transmitted even if no symptoms are present.

Prevent Mosquito Bites:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent, such as DEET, on exposed skin.
- Treat your clothing and gear with permethrin or buy pre-treated items.
- To the extent possible, spend your time indoors in places with air conditioning, and use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out.

Destroy the Habitat:

- Remove standing water inside and around your home.
- Empty and scrub containers that hold water at least once per week. The mosquitoes that transmit Zika breed in containers like flowerpots, spare tires, and birdbaths.

Prevent Spread to Your Partner:

- If you live in or have recently travelled to an area with Zika transmission, use condoms every time you have sex, especially if your partner is pregnant.

If you have any questions about your occupational risk of Zika virus infection or reasonable accommodation as it relates to Zika virus, please contact your supervisor and/or human resources personnel.

For more information about the Zika virus, go to: *http://www.cdc.gov/ZIKA/*

Homeland Security