

ZIKA VIRUS: SIGNS, SYMPTOMS, AND PREVENTION



Zika virus was first discovered in 1947 and is named after the Zika Forest in Uganda. In 1952, the first human cases of Zika were detected and since then, outbreaks of Zika have been reported in tropical Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Zika outbreaks have probably occurred in many locations. Before 2007, at least 14 cases of Zika had been documented, although other cases were likely to have occurred and were not reported. Because the symptoms of Zika are similar to those of many other diseases, many cases may not have been recognized.

How Zika spreads

Zika can be transmitted through:

- Mosquito bites
- From a pregnant woman to her fetus
- Sex
- Blood transfusion (very likely but not confirmed)

Zika symptoms

Many people infected with Zika virus won't have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms. The most common symptoms of Zika are:

- Fever
- Rash
- Joint pain
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Other symptoms include:
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache

Symptoms can last for several days to a week. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. Once a person has been infected with Zika, they are likely to be protected from future infections.

Why Zika is risky for some people

Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a birth defect of the brain called microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects. Other problems have been detected among fetuses and infants infected with Zika virus before birth, such as defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth.



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There have also been increased reports of Guillain-Barré syndrome, an uncommon sickness of the nervous system, in areas affected by Zika.

How to prevent Zika

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika. The best way to prevent diseases spread by mosquitoes is to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites.

Clothing

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Treat your clothing and gear with permethrin or buy pre-treated items.

Insect repellent

- Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol. Always follow the product label instructions.
- When used as directed, these insect repellents are proven safe and effective even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Do not use insect repellents on babies younger than 2 months old.
- Do not use products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol on children younger than 3 years old.

At home

- Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Take steps to control mosquitoes inside and outside your home.
- Mosquito netting can be used to cover babies younger than 2 months old in carriers, strollers, or cribs.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outdoors.

Sexual transmission

- Prevent sexual transmission of Zika by using condoms or not having sex.

How Zika is diagnosed

Diagnosis of Zika is based on a person's recent travel history, symptoms, and test results. A blood or urine test can confirm a Zika infection. Symptoms of Zika are similar to other illnesses spread through mosquito bites, like dengue and chikungunya.

Your doctor or other health care provider may order tests to look for several types of infections.



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What to do if you have Zika

There is no specific medicine or vaccine for Zika virus. Treat the symptoms:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Take medicine such as acetaminophen to reduce fever and pain.
- Do not take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
- If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your health care provider before taking additional medication.

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