

## Talk Zika: Information for Men

### Discussion Points to Share with Patients

Men who visit areas with Zika (like Mexico) need to take special precautions to prevent the spread of Zika to their sexual partners. Men can become infected through a mosquito bite or unprotected sex while traveling, and then pass the virus to someone else through sexual contact. The Zika virus can stay in semen for at least three months. The greatest risk of Zika is to a pregnant woman's fetus.

Men can help protect pregnancies by preventing Zika virus transmission to female sexual partner(s). Men who have sex with men (MSM) can also help prevent the spread of Zika by practicing safer sex. The Zika virus can be spread through any sexual contact with male or female partners.

### Assess Patient Partner Relationship(s)

- ✓ Is your sexual partner currently pregnant?
- ✓ Are you planning pregnancy in the future with your partner? If so, when?
- ✓ **If planning pregnancy:** As your health care provider, I want to make sure you have a healthy pregnancy with your partner.

### Assess Patient Travel History to Determine Potential Zika Exposure

- ✓ Where have you recently traveled?
- ✓ Where do you plan to travel?
- ✓ Do you work or visit family in areas outside the U.S.? Where?

### Key Messages to Share According to Patient Travel Plans

#### For patients preparing for travel to areas with Zika:

- **Emphasize mosquito bite prevention and safer sex practices while in areas with Zika. Patients trying to get pregnant with their partner, or whose partner is already pregnant, should consider delaying travel.**

#### For patients returning from travel to areas with Zika:

- **Emphasize safer sex practices, especially if the patient has a pregnant partner. Patients attempting to get pregnant with their partner should consider delaying pregnancy after returning from travel.**

A map of areas with Zika can be found on the [CDC's travel guidance webpage](#) or view [CDPH's Patient Self-Assessment Tool](#).



#### Travel Packing List

When going to areas with Zika, make sure to pack **and use** the following:

- EPA-registered insect repellent
- Long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Clothing and gear treated with permethrin, if possible
- Bed net if you are sleeping outdoors or in a residence without screens on doors/windows
- Condoms and dental dams, if you might have sex

## Prevention Information

**Note to Provider: Based on the patient's relationship status and travel history, share the appropriate prevention information from sections 1 and 2 below.**

### 1 — For All Men Traveling to Areas with Possible Zika Transmission

- ✓ Prevent sexual transmission of Zika by either not having sex **OR** practicing safer sex with all sexual partners (male or female):
  - Use condoms and dental dams during vaginal, anal and oral sex while staying in areas with risk of Zika **and** for at least 3 months after you return, **OR**
  - Do not have sex while in areas with risk of Zika and for at least 3 months after you return.
  - Not having sex is the only way to be sure that you do not pass Zika to your partner.
- ✓ Prevent mosquito bites while in areas with risk of Zika to ensure you do not become infected while traveling:
  - Use an EPA-registered insect repellent during travel and wear long-sleeved shirts and pants.
  - Continue to use repellent for 3 weeks after you return home so that you do not infect mosquitoes that bite you back home.

### 2 — Other Considerations

#### For Men with Pregnant Partners

- ✓ It is very important to either not have sex or practice safer sex **for the rest of your partner's pregnancy** because you can pass the virus to your partner through sex without knowing it.
- ✓ There is no test to detect Zika virus in semen or how likely you are to spread the virus during sex.

#### For Men Planning Pregnancy with Their Partners

- ✓ It is very important to delay pregnancy for at least 3 months after you think you have been exposed to Zika in order prevent Zika-related complications in your partner's pregnancy. Talk with your partner about effective birth control methods that you both can use to delay pregnancy. Condoms (male or female) and dental dams should be used in combination with effective birth control methods to prevent sexual transmission of Zika. Birth control recommendations include a long-acting, reversible contraceptive like an IUD or implant.
- ✓ There is no test to detect Zika virus in semen or how likely you are to spread the virus during sex.

#### For Men Not Concerned About Pregnancy

- ✓ Even if you are not concerned about pregnancy, Zika is still something you want to avoid getting and spreading to others.

## Symptoms

- ✓ Most people infected with Zika do not have symptoms. If you do get symptoms, they might include: fever, rash, red eyes or joint pain.
- ✓ There is no specific medicine or vaccine for Zika.

**Note to Provider: If the patient has symptoms, advise the use of acetaminophen to reduce fever or pain. Patients should not use ibuprofen or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) until a diagnosis of dengue is ruled out. Dengue infection can cause similar symptoms as Zika, but can cause internal bleeding.**

## References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Men and Zika. September 2017  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/men/index.html>)

Interim Guidance for Preconception Counseling and Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus for Persons with Possible Zika Virus Exposure, United States, September (MMWR, September 30, 2016)

Interim Guidance for Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus, United States, July 2016 (MMWR, July 25, 2016)

Interim Guidance for Health Care Providers Caring for Pregnant Women with Possible Zika Virus Exposure, United States, July 2017 (MMWR, July 28, 2017)

Update: Interim Guidance for Preconception Counseling and Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus for Men with Possible Zika Virus Exposure, United States, August 2018 (MMWR, August 10, 2018)