



"Protecting the health of all Californians"

COMMUNICATE. PUBLIC. HEALTH.

FEBRUARY 12, 2016

Zika Virus Background

Zika virus is an infectious disease transmitted to people by *Aedes* mosquitoes. Zika virus occurs in many tropical and sub-tropical areas of the world, particularly in Africa, Southeast Asia and islands in the Pacific Ocean. Recent outbreaks have occurred in the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. The primary means of transmission of Zika virus is through mosquitoes. There have been rare reports of the spread of Zika virus through sexual contact; there is limited information about the frequency of transmission through sexual contact and how long infected persons might be infectious.

Most people infected with Zika virus will not develop symptoms. If symptoms do develop, they are usually mild and include fever, rash, joint pain and/or red eyes. Symptoms usually begin 2-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito and last several days to a week. Severe Zika virus disease requiring hospitalization is rare.

If you have recently traveled to an area where Zika virus is present and you have these symptoms, your physician can order different tests to help determine the cause.

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika virus. While there is no

specific treatment for Zika virus, the best recommendations are supportive care: rest, fluids and fever relief. Most people will feel better in about a week.

There is a possible association between Zika virus and microcephaly (abnormally small head and brain) in newborns. It is suspected that pregnant women who get infected with Zika virus may pass the virus to the developing fetus. However, there are many causes of microcephaly in babies, and whether Zika virus infection causes microcephaly has not been confirmed.

[Resources](#)

[CDC Website: Zika Virus](#)

[Zika Virus Detection Sites in CA](#)

[CDPH Health Advisory: Zika Virus in Latin America](#)

[Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#)

[CDPH Zika Virus Press Release](#)

Protecting Against Mosquitoes and Zika Virus

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a travel alert for people traveling to regions and certain countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing: American Samoa, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Samoa, St. Martin, Suriname, Tonga, Venezuela and Puerto Rico.

Until more is known, and out of an abundance of caution, the California Department of Public Health recommends special travel precautions for pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant. In areas where Zika is present, everyone, including pregnant women and women of childbearing age, should protect themselves from mosquito bites.

- Mosquito repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus should be applied to exposed skin and clothing. Pregnant women and

women who are breastfeeding can and should choose an EPA-registered insect repellent.

- When weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- The risk for sexual transmission of Zika virus can be eliminated by abstinence and reduced by correct and consistent use of condoms.

California Cases

As of February 12, 2016, there are nine confirmed cases of Zika virus infections in California,

- 2013 (1)
- 2014 (3)
- 2015 (2)
- 2016 (3)

All cases were contracted when traveling in other countries.

Updates will be provided every Friday on the [CDPH website](#).

Preventing Establishment of Zika Virus in California

To date no local transmission of Zika virus has occurred in California. All documented Zika virus cases have occurred in persons who were infected while traveling outside the United States. To help prevent the establishment of Zika in California, please consider the following:

- If you are sick with fever, rash, red-eyes or joint pain within two weeks from returning from a high risk area, contact your healthcare provider and avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.
- Prevent mosquito breeding by eliminating any standing water including gutters, pet dishes, bird baths, etc.
- Contact the local vector control agency if you detect mosquitoes or you are being bitten during the day.