

## Zika Virus Updates

### **Zika Description**

Zika is a viral disease that is spread to people through the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito. Approximately 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become symptomatic. Characteristic clinical findings are acute onset of fever with maculopapular rash, arthralgia, or conjunctivitis. Other commonly reported symptoms include myalgia and headache. Symptoms typically begin 2 to 7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito and can last for several days to a week. The illness is usually mild; however, there have been cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) reported in patients following suspected Zika virus infection.

Nonhuman and human primates are likely the main reservoirs of the virus, and anthroponotic (human-to-vector-to-human) transmission occurs during outbreaks. Perinatal, in utero, and sexual and transfusion transmission events have also been reported. Reports from Brazil have indicated that microcephaly and other poor pregnancy outcomes have occurred in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. However, additional studies are needed to further characterize this relationship. Persistent virus has been reported in urine and semen when there has been no detectable virus in the blood.

### **Zika Travel Updates**

CDC is recommending that travelers practice enhanced precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites when traveling to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to these areas. Pregnant women who do travel to one of these areas should talk to their doctor or other health care provider first and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.

For up-to-date travel recommendations and travel alerts regarding Zika, visit:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>.

### **Zika Testing Recommendations**

During the first week after onset of symptoms, Zika virus disease can often be diagnosed by performing reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) on serum. Virus-specific IgM and neutralizing antibodies typically develop toward the end of the first week of illness; cross-reaction with related flaviviruses (e.g., dengue and yellow fever viruses) is common. Therefore, Zika infection may be difficult to discern. There are no commercially available diagnostic tests for Zika virus disease. Zika virus testing is performed at the CDC Arbovirus Diagnostic Laboratory and a few state health departments including the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

In 2016, Zika virus disease became a nationally notifiable condition. Health care providers are encouraged to report suspected cases to their state or local health departments to facilitate diagnosis and mitigate the risk of local transmission.

For additional information about Zika including Maryland case counts and links to additional resources, visit: <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/pages/zika.aspx>.