

Travelers' Alerts

On 1/15/16 the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Level 2 (Practice Enhanced Precautions) travel alert for [countries where the Zika virus is prevalent](#), including some areas frequented by students, faculty and staff during spring break and for study abroad programs.

Prevention

When traveling to countries where Zika virus transmission is occurring:

- [Prevent mosquito bites](#). These precautions can prevent any illness transmitted by mosquitos.
- [If pregnant or trying to get pregnant](#), talk to your healthcare provider and postpone travel to areas where transmission is ongoing.
- If sexually active, consider abstaining from sexual activity or using condoms consistently and correctly during sexual intercourse during the entire pregnancy.
- Women at risk for pregnancy should strongly consider using a reliable hormonal method of contraception along with a barrier method to avoid pregnancy and should contact their healthcare provider for advice on how long to continue after they return from a Zika-infected area.
- Unless necessary due to a medical emergency, avoid contact with blood or blood products.

After returning from an area where Zika virus transmission is occurring:

- Returning males who are concerned about sexual transmission of Zika virus consider abstaining from sexual activity or using condoms consistently and correctly during sexual intercourse. Continue to check the CDC websites for up to date guidance on how long to continue this practice.
Pregnant women who have two or more symptoms consistent with Zika virus disease during or within two weeks of travel, or who have ultrasound findings consistent with microcephaly, should consult with their obstetrician to be tested for Zika virus infection.
- If diagnosed with Zika, protect transmissions to others by taking precautions to avoid mosquito bites during the first week after your return.
- Routinely check the CDC's [Travel Health Notices](#) for updated alerts on Zika and other illnesses.

Transmission

Zika virus is transmitted primarily through bites of infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person infected with the Zika virus and spread the illness by then biting others. The virus is also spread by infected blood (e.g. blood transfusions), and sexual and maternal-fetal transmission have also been documented. Sexual transmission is more common than previously assumed.

Symptoms and Special Concerns for Pregnant Women

In general, Zika virus infection is usually without symptoms. When symptoms are present, they last a few days to a week, are mild, and include a rash and fever, with possible conjunctivitis (red eyes), and muscle and joint pains. Symptoms requiring hospitalization are uncommon. Currently there is no vaccine to prevent or specific medicine to treat Zika.

Pregnant women, however, have [special reasons for concern](#). Zika is linked to a type of birth defect called microcephaly. The link is strong enough to trigger the CDC to recommend that pregnant women postpone travel to areas where Zika transmission is ongoing. Women trying to get pregnant should consult their healthcare provider before traveling to these areas and consider using a reliable method of contraception while in a Zika-risk area.

Pregnant women returning from Zika-affected areas should notify their prenatal healthcare provider of their travel history. Pregnant women should avoid the semen of male partners returning from Zika-infected areas and should contact their healthcare provider to determine how long this is necessary.

For more information, go to the [CDC's main Zika Virus page](#).