

Zika Virus Disease

Frequently Asked Questions | April 2016

For comprehensive information about Zika Virus, including up-to-date travel recommendations, visit the Centers for Disease Control website <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

Zika Virus and Pregnancy

1. Does Zika in pregnant women cause birth defects?

Additional studies are needed to determine the degree to which Zika might be linked with microcephaly (a birth defect in which the size of a baby's head is smaller than expected for age and gender). Additional lab testing and other studies are planned to learn more about the risks of Zika virus infection during pregnancy. Because of the possible association between Zika infection and microcephaly, pregnant women should take steps to prevent mosquito bites.

Brazil has been having a significant outbreak of Zika virus since May 2015. Officials in Brazil have also noted an increase in the number of babies with congenital microcephaly during that time. Congenital microcephaly is often a sign of the brain not developing normally during pregnancy. Health authorities in Brazil, along with the CDC and other agencies are investigating the possible association between Zika virus infection and microcephaly.

2. Can mothers pass Zika on to their fetuses during pregnancy?

Zika virus can be passed from a mother to her fetus during pregnancy. The CDC is studying how Zika affects pregnancies.

3. What should a pregnant woman do if she has previously traveled to a place with a Zika outbreak, or if she gets sick during or after that travel?

Pregnant women who have recently traveled to an area with Zika should talk to a health care provider about their travel even if they don't feel sick. It is especially important that pregnant women see a doctor if they develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes during their trip or within two weeks after traveling to a country where Zika has been reported. The CDC has guidance to help doctors decide what tests are needed for pregnant women who may have been exposed to Zika.

4. Should pregnant women travel to places with Zika outbreaks?

Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus is spreading. If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your health care provider first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip. For information on areas with Zika, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.

5. Should women trying to get pregnant travel to places with Zika outbreaks?

Until more is known, the CDC recommends that women trying to get pregnant and their male partners talk to their healthcare provider before traveling to areas with Zika. Because sexual transmission is possible, both men and women should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.