

# Zika Infection

## Fact Sheet



Maine Center for Disease  
Control and Prevention  
An Office of the  
Department of Health and Human Services

### What is Zika?

Zika virus disease is caused by the Zika virus. Zika virus is spread to people mostly through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito.

### How do people get infected with Zika?

You can get Zika virus through the bite of an infected mosquito. A person with Zika can also pass the virus to their sex partners during unprotected sex. The virus can also be passed from a pregnant woman to her baby during pregnancy.

### What are the symptoms of Zika?

The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other signs of sickness include muscle pain and headache. Many people with Zika will not have any symptoms. If symptoms are present, they usually last for several days to a week.

### How do I know if I have Zika?

To find out if you have Zika, your doctor will ask you about recent travel and symptoms you may have. Your doctor may also collect blood or urine to test for Zika or similar viruses. Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) and other commercial laboratories can test for Zika virus.

### What health problems can result from getting Zika?

Zika virus during pregnancy can cause your baby to have serious birth defects like microcephaly. Microcephaly is a birth defect where a baby's head is smaller than normal. Research shows that Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) is strongly linked with Zika. GBS is an uncommon sickness of the nervous system. However, only a small number of people with recent Zika virus infection get GBS.

Once a person becomes infected with Zika, it is very likely they will be protected from future infections. There is no evidence that past Zika infection can harm future pregnancies.

### Am I at risk for getting Zika virus?

The mosquitoes that can carry Zika are currently not found in Maine. However, people who travel to areas with Zika are at risk.

All pregnant women can protect themselves by not going to areas with Zika and not having unprotected sex with someone that lives in or traveled to an area with Zika. You should talk to your doctor if you are pregnant and must travel to an area with risk of Zika. See a doctor if you have any signs of Zika during or after your trip.

### What is the treatment for Zika?

There is no specific treatment for Zika. People with mild infections usually recover on their own. Doctors can provide supportive therapy to patients with severe infections.

### What can I do to prevent Zika?

The best way to prevent Zika is to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites. This is really important when travelling to areas with Zika.

- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved insect repellents.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outdoors.
- Do not have sex with someone that lives in or traveled to an area with Zika or use condoms every time.

Condoms include male and female condoms. Condoms should be used from start to finish, every time during vaginal, anal, and oral sex and the sharing of sex toys.

### Where can I get more information?

For more information, contact your doctor or local health center. You can also call Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-821-5821 or visit the Zika page on Maine CDC's website: [www.maine.gov/dhhs/zika/](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/zika/). The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - [www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika) – is another excellent source of Zika virus information.