

Zika Virus FAQ's

Transmission

The Zika virus is primarily spread to people through mosquito bites. The virus can be spread from mother to child. Spread of the virus through blood transfusion and sexual contact has also been reported. Not all mosquito types transmit the Zika virus. It is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito (*A. aegypti* and possibly *A. albopictus*). These mosquitoes are mainly found in South Texas and along the Texas coast, but are also present in other parts of Texas, especially urban environments. They typically lay eggs in and near standing water in things like buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots and vases. They live indoors and outdoors.

Symptoms

Approximately 80% of people infected with the virus do not become ill. For those who do develop symptoms, illness is generally mild and typically lasts a few days to a week. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and fatalities are rare. An increase in Guillain-Barré syndrome was noted during an outbreak of Zika virus in French Polynesia in 2014. An increase in microcephaly was noted during an outbreak of Zika virus in Brazil in 2015.

Contracting Zika

Even if you don't know you're infected, mosquitoes that bite you could transmit the virus to others. Mosquitoes may pick up certain viruses, such as Zika, from biting a human who has a Zika infection. The Zika virus also can be spread from mother to child, if the mother is infected with the Zika virus during pregnancy. There have not been any reports of pets or other kinds of animals spreading or contracting Zika.

Prevention

Currently, there is no vaccine or treatment for the Zika virus. Your best protection to avoid infection is to prevent mosquito breeding and protect yourself from mosquito bites.

Prevent Mosquito Breeding

- At least weekly empty or get rid of cans, buckets, old tires, pots, plant saucers and other containers that hold water.
- Keep gutters clear of debris and standing water.
- Remove standing water around structures and from flat roofs.
- Change water in pet dishes daily.
- Rinse and scrub vases and other indoor water containers weekly.
- Change water in wading pools and bird baths several times a week.
- Maintain backyard pools or hot tubs.

- Cover trash containers.
- Water lawns and gardens carefully so water does not stand for several days.
- Screen rain barrels and openings to water tanks or cisterns.
- Treat front and back door areas of homes with residual insecticides if mosquitoes are abundant nearby.
- If mosquito problems persist, consider pesticide applications for vegetation around the home.

Protect Yourself from Mosquito Bites

- Wear Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents. When used as directed, these insect repellents – including those that contain DEET – are proven safe and effective even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Cover up with long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Keep mosquitoes out with air conditioning or intact window screens.
- Limit outdoor activities during peak mosquito times.

People who are traveling to areas where Zika is being spread should protect themselves from mosquito bites while abroad and for 21 days after returning home to help prevent themselves from becoming infected, and to keep from spreading the virus to mosquitoes in Texas in case the travelers were exposed to Zika.

The CDC also Recommends:

- Pregnant women and their male sex partners should discuss the male partner's potential exposures and history of Zika-like illness with the pregnant woman's health care provider.
- Men with a pregnant sex partner who reside in or have traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission and their pregnant sex partners should consistently and correctly use condoms during sex or abstain from sexual activity for the duration of the pregnancy.
- Couples in which a man resides in or has traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission who are concerned about sexual transmission of Zika virus may consider using condoms consistently and correctly during sex or abstaining from sexual activity.

Protection for Outdoor Workers

If you work or spend a lot of time outdoors, there is a greater chance that you could be bitten by a mosquito that may carry the Zika virus. When you're outside:

- Use insect repellents according to the CDC's guidance. When used as directed, these insect repellents – including those that contain DEET – are proven safe and effective even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Wear clothing that covers their hands, arms, legs, and other exposed skin. This can include hats with mosquito netting and socks to cover your ankles.
- In warmer weather, wear lightweight, loose-fitting pants and long-sleeve shirts.

Improve Your Outdoor Settings:

- Remove standing water in cans, bottles, buckets, tires, wheel barrows or any container that can hold water.
- Cover trash cans or containers where water can collect.

The City of Rockwall will continue to remain informed about the risks of mosquito borne diseases and provide updated information as it becomes available. The City treats stagnant water with a larvicide. This is an integral part of the approach recommended by the CDC in minimizing the number of mosquitoes in our area. The City also conducts a mosquito surveillance program by trapping and testing mosquitoes for West Nile Virus. Mosquitoes are a direct indicator of human illness risk when it comes to West Nile Virus in addition to Zika. Residents are encouraged to report standing water, stagnant pools/spas, or other concerns by email at: wyoung@rockwall.com

Resources

Dallas County

[Public Service Announcement- ZIKA and WNV](https://www.dallascounty.org/hhs/)

<https://www.dallascounty.org/hhs/>

<http://www.dallascounty.org/department/hhs/zika.html>

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/disease-qa.html>

Texas Department of State Health Services

<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>

<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/arboviral/zika/>

www.texaszika.org

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

<http://preventingzika.org/>