



## Zika Information FAQ

### 1. What is Zika fever?

Zika fever is a mild illness caused by a mosquito-borne virus similar to those that cause dengue and chikungunya virus infection. It has been identified in several countries in Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean since 2015. Outbreaks have previously been reported in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. Local transmission has been reported in Puerto Rico and in a small area in Miami-Dade County. Transmission occurs through the bite of an infected mosquito. Perinatal, in utero, sexual, transfusion and bodily fluids transmissions have also been reported but, to date, transmission through breastfeeding has not been reported.

### 2. What is the status of Zika virus in Florida?

Florida has confirmed local transmissions of Zika virus are occurring in two small areas in Miami-Dade County. Area One is a small, less than one-square mile area in Miami-Dade County, just north of downtown. The department has cleared three portions within the one-square mile as no additional people tested positive in those areas. Area Two is a less-than 1.5 square mile area in Miami Beach within the boundaries of 8<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> streets. Florida's small case cluster is not considered widespread transmission. A map detailing the impacted areas is available on the department's Zika virus webpage. Please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).

### 3. Do you think Zika virus will spread in Florida?

We know, from our experience with dengue fever and chikungunya virus, which are spread by the same mosquito, that travelers who come back infected can infect local mosquito populations.

With what we know from dengue and chikungunya, it is very unlikely we will have large outbreaks of Zika fever in the United States. One major reason for this is that we have better housing with air conditioning and intact screens that protect us from being bitten by mosquitoes in our homes.

When locally acquired mosquito-borne illness is present, the department works closely with mosquito control to stop further transmission of the virus of concern. Mosquito control and the health department jointly provide public education whenever possible as well since it is very important that all residents cooperate and drain containers on their property at least weekly to help successfully control this mosquito. We would follow the same protocol for an outbreak of Zika virus.

### 4. Where can I find the most current information on Zika virus activity in Florida?

We've created a webpage with a variety of resources for public and health care community, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/>

Each day the department updates the website and issues a press release with case count information at 2 p.m.

The department continues to proactively communicate with health care professionals, specifically obstetricians, regarding Zika.

**5. Are there countries that I should avoid travel to?**

To see a list of travel health notices issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention please visit: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices> for an updated list of countries with Zika Virus transmission, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/>.

**6. Is Zika virus illness contagious?**

Zika is primarily transmitted by mosquito bite. Transmission through sexual contact is possible; however, we still have limited knowledge about this form of transmission.

The best way to avoid Zika fever is to prevent mosquito bites. The best preventive measures are to **Drain** standing water to prevent mosquito breeding around your home or business, **Cover** doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes outside of homes and **Cover** skin with clothing or mosquito repellent to prevent mosquito bites.

**7. How is Zika virus transmitted?**

Zika virus is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito, including the same mosquitoes that can transmit dengue and chikungunya. It can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth. It is unknown how often this occurs or what stage of pregnancy is most at risk. There are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding. In addition, Zika virus can be present in semen and transmitted through sexual activity.

**8. Who is at risk of being infected?**

Anyone who is living in or traveling to an area where Zika virus is found who has not already been infected with Zika virus is at risk for infection, including pregnant women.

**9. What are the symptoms of Zika virus infection?**

Only about 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus are symptomatic. Zika fever is a mild illness. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. Signs and symptoms of Zika virus may include: acute onset of low-grade fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis (reddening of eye), body aches, headache, eye pain and vomiting.

**10. Are you placing anyone infected under quarantine?**

There is no need to quarantine people infected with Zika virus. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they develop symptoms or become sick. Isolation is used to separate sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. All should take precautions to prevent mosquito bites (Drain and Cover). Use EPA approved mosquito repellent, wear comfortable clothing that covers skin, keep doors and windows covered with screens to keep mosquitoes outside, and drain standing water around homes and businesses to significantly reduce mosquito populations of concern.

**11. Can I get the Zika virus if I am bitten by a mosquito that bit someone who has Zika virus?**

The correct species of mosquito would need to bite an infected person in the few days that person had the Zika virus present in their blood. It would then take several days for that mosquito to become infectious to another person. There are one or two types of mosquitoes known to be of concern in Florida, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*.

**12. Why do people say that pregnant mothers should be aware of this virus?**

The Ministry of Health of Brazil has reported an increase in the numbers of newborns with microcephaly as well as other poor pregnancy outcomes in areas experiencing Zika virus outbreaks. The CDC is conducting research to further characterize the relationship between Zika virus and poor pregnancy outcomes. More studies are planned to learn more about the risks of Zika virus infection during pregnancy. There are many causes of microcephaly in babies, including genetic abnormalities.

### **13. How can I protect myself and my family?**

The Florida Department of Health encourages Florida residents and visitors to protect themselves from all mosquito-borne illnesses by draining standing water; covering their skin with repellent and clothing; covering windows with screens; and other basic precautions.

#### **DRAIN standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying**

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

#### **COVER skin with clothing or repellent**

- CLOTHING - Wear shoes, socks, and long pants and long-sleeves. This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.
- REPELLENT - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.
  - Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective.
  - Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.

#### **COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house**

- Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

### **14. What should I do if I think I have Zika fever?**

If you feel that you might have Zika fever, please visit your health care provider. A health care provider will determine if the patient is exhibiting symptoms of Zika virus and discuss the patient's travel history.

If appropriate, based on the guidance from the CDC, the health care provider will order a specialized blood test or urine test. All testing has to be ordered by a health care provider, in communication with their department of health and CDC. Travelers returning home from areas with active Zika virus transmission should avoid being bitten by mosquitoes for three weeks following travel, especially while ill, to prevent infection of local mosquitoes. Women who were traveling in areas where Zika virus was active during their pregnancy should consult with their obstetrician.

### **15. Where do the tests go for confirmation of the virus?**

Florida's public health laboratory has a developed capacity to test for infections. The department works closely with health care providers in the state to offer testing to individuals that meet CDC testing criteria. Two of our three public health laboratories in Florida (Tampa and Jacksonville) have the

capability to test for the Zika virus. The test for active virus is commercially available. The antibody test for Zika virus (to see if a person ever had it) is only available from the CDC. Health care providers should call their county health department to report cases and to confirm whether samples meet testing criteria. The contact information for each county health department is attached and can also be found at: [www.floridahealth.gov/CHDEpiContact](http://www.floridahealth.gov/CHDEpiContact). A specific urine test for the Zika virus can be now performed if the patient has had symptoms for less than 14 days.

**16. How soon do infected people get sick?**

People typically develop symptoms between 2 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito. Zika fever is a mild illness with only 1 out of 5 cases known to show symptoms. Severe cases of the disease is uncommon.

**17. What treatment options are available for Zika virus illness?**

Since there is no specific treatment against the virus, treat the symptoms by getting plenty of rest, drink fluids to prevent dehydration, take medicines to relieve fever and pain. Illness typically resolves within a week.

**18. I am pregnant or am trying to become pregnant. Should I travel to a country where cases of Zika have been reported?**

CDC has issued a [travel alert \(Level 2-Practice Enhanced Precautions\)](#) for people traveling to regions and certain countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Because specific areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing are likely to change over time, please visit <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices> for more information on current travel notices and <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/> for an updated list of counties with Zika virus transmission. Until more is known, and out of an abundance of caution, CDC recommends special precautions for pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant:

- Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to the areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Pregnant women who do travel to one of these areas should talk to their doctor or other healthcare provider first and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.
- Women trying to become pregnant should consult with their healthcare provider before traveling to these areas and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.
- If the male partner of a pregnant woman lives in or travels to an area with active Zika virus transmission the couple should abstain from sex or use condoms every time they have vaginal, anal and oral sex for the duration of the pregnancy.

**19. Is it safe to travel to Florida?**

Yes, traveling to Florida is safe. Florida's small case cluster is not considered widespread transmission. The CDC recommends that pregnant women limit unnecessary travel to the two small impacted areas in Miami-Dade County where active transmission is taking place. Travelers to Florida should always take precautions to protect against mosquito bites (such as repellents) and sun burns (sun screen, sun glasses).

**20. I am pregnant and want to travel to Florida is it safe?**

Yes, traveling to Florida is safe. Florida's small case cluster is not considered widespread transmission. The CDC recommends that pregnant women limit unnecessary travel to the two small impacted areas in Miami-Dade County where active transmission is taking place. Travelers to Florida should always take precautions to protect against mosquito bites (such as repellents) and sun burns (sun screen, sun glasses).

**21. Is it safe for pregnant women to use insect repellent?**

Yes, it is safe for pregnant or nursing women to use EPA-approved repellants if applied according to package label instructions.

**22. Should I postpone my trip to Florida?**

No, there is no reason related to Zika virus to postpone your travel to Florida. Florida's small case cluster is not considered widespread transmission.

**23. Do you have Zika virus in Florida?**

The department has confirmed local transmissions of Zika virus are occurring in two small areas in Miami-Dade County. Area One is a small, less than one-square mile area in Miami-Dade County, just north of downtown. The department has cleared three portions within the one-square mile as no additional people tested positive in those areas. Area Two is a less-than 1.5 square mile area in Miami Beach within the boundaries of 8<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> streets. Florida's small case cluster is not considered widespread transmission. A map detailing the impacted areas is available on the department's Zika virus webpage. Please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov). There is no active transmission of Zika virus outside of these two small areas in Miami-Dade County. Florida has also reported some Zika cases among people who traveled to other countries and contracted the virus there.

**24. What is being done to prevent transmission of Zika virus in Florida?**

Each suspected case of Zika virus infection is tested at the state public health laboratory. County health department staff report suspect Zika fever cases to local mosquito control staff to make sure mosquito control activities are put in place. State and local health departments work closely with other parties to make sure people at risk for Zika virus infections as well as health care providers stay informed with the most current science about Zika fever. We also provide education about effective repellents. These include products with DEET, picaridin, IR 3535 and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-methane-diol products.

**25. Can Zika virus lay dormant and affect me later in life?**

At this time there is no indication that there could be long term effects down the road. All data and evidence at this time supports that Zika is an acute illness and is not persistent.

**26. I heard that you can contract Zika virus by sexual contact, is it true?**

There is evidence to support that men can pass Zika to their male or female sexual partners, and females can pass Zika to their male, and possibly female, sexual partners during vaginal, anal and oral sex – before symptoms start, while symptoms are occurring, as well as after the symptoms end. According to CDC guidance, pregnant woman with sex partners (male or female) who live in or who have traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission should use barrier methods against infection or do not have sex for the duration of the pregnancy.

According to the CDC:

- Couples who include a man who has been diagnosed with Zika or had symptoms of Zika should consider using condoms or not having sex for at least 6 months after symptoms begin. This includes men who live in and men who traveled to areas with Zika.
- Couples who include a man who traveled to an area with Zika but did not develop symptoms of Zika should consider using condoms or not having sex for at least 8 weeks after their return.
- Couples with a non-pregnant female in which one partner has confirmed or suspected Zika virus infection or has traveled to a Zika-endemic area but has not developed symptoms consistent with Zika virus infection should either use barrier methods against infection or abstain from sexual contact.

**27. Who can I call to get sprayed for mosquitoes around my house?**

In Florida, many counties and cities have mosquito control services. Please contact your county or city government offices to find out if these services are available in your area.

The mosquitoes that spread Zika breed in small containers so you can also limit your risk by making sure to dump all sources of standing water in bird baths, flower pots, etc. on your property at least weekly.

**28. Can Zika virus harm pets or livestock?**

There is no evidence to date that suggests that Zika virus can harm domestic pets or livestock.

**29. Additional Information**

For more information on mosquito bite prevention visit Florida Department of Health, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/prevention.html> and [http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/zika-virus/index.html?utm\\_source=flhealthIndex](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/zika-virus/index.html?utm_source=flhealthIndex). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/> also available in Spanish, [http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/mediosdecomunicacion/comunicados/d\\_recomendaciones\\_viajeros\\_virus\\_del\\_zika\\_011516.html](http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/mediosdecomunicacion/comunicados/d_recomendaciones_viajeros_virus_del_zika_011516.html).

For Mosquito-borne disease and vector surveillance, please visit, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/surveillance.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/vector/index.html>.

**30. Listing of County Health Departments including addresses and phone numbers:**

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/county-health-departments/find-a-county-health-department/index.html>.

**31. Can Zika be spread through saliva?**

There are still a number of things to learn about the Zika virus. One of the unknowns is whether the virus can be spread via saliva. Science to date suggests saliva is not a very important transmission route, although it is too early to say whether the virus never is transmitted through saliva.

**32. If he (partner/husband) was infected with the Zika virus, for how long will the virus be present in his semen?**

At this time, it is unknown how long the virus can stay infectious in semen. Zika virus has been detected in semen up to 62 days after symptoms first appeared.

**33. Where can I go to get tested for Zika? Although I am asymptomatic, are there any options available?**

Your local health care provider will order a test if he/she suspects the Zika virus to be present.

**34. Recently, while I was in Florida I was bitten by multiple insects, some I believe to be mosquitoes. I am not experiencing flu-like symptoms. Should I be concerned about having Zika?**

Florida's small case cluster in Miami-Dade County is not considered widespread transmission. However, the flu and other respiratory diseases are currently circulating. Make sure to wash your hands and cover your cough to prevent the spread of your illness to others. We hope you feel better soon.

**35. Is the Zika virus detectible through an ultrasound?**

No. It is possible to detect some of the birth defects associated with Zika virus transmission through ultrasound. The baby must be tested for the virus to determine the cause of these health issues.

**36. How do I know if I should be tested?**

If you have travel history to areas with active transmission or have had sexual contact with a partner who lives in or traveled to an area with active transmission and you are experiencing symptoms, you should talk to your health care provider to see if testing is recommended.

**37. I heard county health departments are offering free testing for pregnant women. Is that true?**

Yes. The Governor directed all county health departments to conduct free Zika risk assessment and testing to all pregnant women who would like to be tested. You can contact your local county health department of testing hours and information.

**38. I'm pregnant but not showing any symptoms. Can I still get a free Zika risk assessment and/or test for Zika at my county health department?**

Any pregnant women who would like to be tested for Zika can do so at their local county health department for free. County health departments are also conducting free Zika risk assessment for pregnant women to help determine if testing is recommended. There is no limit to the number of tests a pregnant woman can receive and there is no requirement to verify pregnancy status.

**39. How does testing the free testing for pregnant women at county health departments work? How quickly will I know the results of the test?**

After a urine and/or blood sample is obtained at a county health department, your sample will be sent to a lab for testing. The department is making available additional lab services to handle the expected increase in tests being administered. Once the lab receives the sample, it can take one to two weeks to get results.

**40. Do I need to set an appointment or can I walk in to a county health department to be tested?**

Please call ahead to your local county health department. Due to the expected volume of requests, some county health departments may require an appointment for testing. If an appointment must be made, it will be done so in a timely fashion: your appointment will be within a week of your request.

**41. Do I have to go to a county health department or can I go to my doctor for the test?**

Medical providers can order a Zika test for their patient, but actual testing is done at a lab. Some doctors' offices may collect samples at their office and then send the samples to the lab for testing, or they may give their patient a lab order.

**42. I heard the county health departments are not prepared for testing. Is this true?**

At the Governor's direction, county health departments worked quickly to operationalize free Zika risk assessment and testing for pregnant women. All county health departments are currently offering these services and have the resources needed to meet the increased demand.

## **Local Transmission In South Florida**

**43. I live in South Florida and read someone got Zika in Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Broward Counties who did not travel overseas. Is Zika spreading here?**



Florida has confirmed local transmissions of Zika virus are occurring in two small areas in Miami-Dade County. Area One is a small, less than one-square mile area in Miami-Dade County, just north of downtown. The department has cleared three portions within the one-square mile as no additional people tested positive in those areas. Area Two is a less-than 1.5 square mile area in Miami Beach within the boundaries of 8<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> streets. Florida's small case cluster is not considered widespread transmission. A map detailing the impacted areas is available on the department's Zika virus webpage. Please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).

There is no active transmission in Broward County or Palm Beach County. The department is investigating a case in Palm Beach County. If the department identifies an area of concern, they will alert the public immediately. Florida's small case cluster is not considered widespread transmission.

**44. Can you tell me where the person lives?**

We cannot share details about where the person lives, but mosquito control has completed reduction and prevention activities in that area to mitigate any potential spread. The department has created maps outlining the two small areas in Miami-Dade County where local transmission is occurring. Please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov) to view the maps.

**45. How did the person get Zika? Was it from a mosquito?**

We believe these cases were likely transmitted through infected mosquitoes in this area.

**46. Do you think we will have an outbreak of Zika in South Florida?**

We know, from our experience with dengue virus and chikungunya virus, which are spread by the same mosquito, that travelers who come back infected can infect local mosquito populations.

With what we know from dengue and chikungunya, it is very unlikely we will have large outbreaks of Zika fever. One major reason for this is that we have better housing with air conditioning and intact screens that protect us from being bitten by mosquitoes in our homes.

When locally acquired mosquito-borne illness is present, the department works closely with mosquito control to stop further transmission of the virus of concern. Mosquito control and the health department jointly provide public education whenever possible as well since it is very important that all residents cooperate and drain containers on their property at least weekly to help successfully control this mosquito. We have successfully prevented widespread transmission of other mosquito-borne viruses in the past and we would follow the same protocol for an outbreak of Zika virus.

**47. What are they doing in South Florida as part of the investigation?**

The Florida Department of Health is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the investigation. A CDC medical epidemiologist is working with DOH staff to assist with mapping and testing methodology. The department is interviewing and testing people in the areas under investigation.

**48. I am pregnant and live in or near the area where local transmission is happening. What should I do?**

We have been working closely with OB/GYN and other medical providers in the area. Zika prevention kits are available at your local OB/GYN office and at your county health department. Pregnant women should protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing insect repellent and covering skin with long clothing. The CDC recommends that pregnant women limit unnecessary travel to the impacted area. If



you are pregnant and you live or frequently visit the area, contact your health care provider or county health department to inquire about being tested for Zika.