

# ZIKA VIRUS FACT SHEET

## IS THE ZIKA VIRUS IN CAYMAN

UPDATED - 11 AUGUST 2016



### What is Zika Virus?

- Zika is a viral illness transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito.
- Outbreaks of Zika have occurred in areas of Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the Americas. Because the Aedes species mosquitoes that spread Zika virus are found throughout the world, it is likely that outbreaks will spread to new countries.

### What are the symptoms?

- The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. The infection often present itself as asymptomatic (showing no symptoms).
- About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become ill (i.e. develop symptoms).
- Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

### What is the global, regional and local burden of Zika Virus?

- The disease was first reported among human population in Uganda and Tanzania in 1952 followed by Nigeria in 1968. More recently in 2007 the first major outbreak of Zika virus occurred on the Island of Yap, in Micronesia. Outbreaks of the Zika virus have been recorded in the Americas, (including the Caribbean), Asia, and the Pacific.

### Is there Zika Virus in Cayman?

- As of August 8, 2016 the Cayman Islands confirmed its first case of local transmission.

### How is Zika Virus transmitted?

- Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. These are the same mosquitoes that spread dengue and chikungunya viruses. (<http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/index.html>)
- These mosquitoes typically lay eggs in and near standing water in things like buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots and vases.
- They are aggressive daytime biters, prefer to bite people, and live indoors and outdoors near people.

- Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus.
- Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites.

### Is Zika Virus transmitted from person to person?

- Zika virus can be spread by sexual contact. Eleven countries have reported evidence of person to person transmission of the Zika virus via sexual contact.
- It can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth.
- There have been multiple reports of possible spread of the virus through blood transfusion, however these reports are currently being investigated.
- There has been one report of a possible person to person transmission in Utah, USA. This report is under investigation.

### Should pregnant women be concerned about Zika?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have confirmed the epidemiological link between the Zika virus, microcephaly and Guillain-Barré syndrome. Pregnant women are advised to postpone non-essential travel to areas where there is active Zika virus transmission or take great caution against being bitten by the Aedes aegypti mosquito that carries the virus.
- If you are pregnant and suspect that you may have Zika virus disease, consult your doctor for close monitoring during your pregnancy.

### What is microcephaly and Guillain-Barré syndrome?

- Microcephaly is a rare condition where a baby has an abnormally small head. This is due to abnormal brain development of the baby in the womb or during infancy. Babies and children with microcephaly often have challenges with their brain development as they grow older.
- Microcephaly can also be caused by a variety of environmental and genetic factors such as Down syndrome; exposure to drugs, alcohol or other toxins in the womb; and

also rubella infection during pregnancy.

- Guillain-Barré syndrome is a rare condition in which a person's immune system attacks
- Their peripheral nervous system. These are the nerves that control muscle movement as well as those that transmit feelings of pain, temperature and touch.

## How soon do symptoms occur after the bite of an infected mosquito?

- About 4 days (can be 3-12 days) after being bitten by an infected mosquito the patient can start to exhibit the first signs and symptoms.

## How is Zika Virus diagnosed?

- The symptoms of Zika are similar to those of dengue and chikungunya (<http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/index.html>), which are diseases caused by other viruses spread by the same type of mosquitoes.
- See your healthcare provider if you develop the symptoms described in the link above and have visited an area where Zika is present.
- If you have recently traveled, tell your healthcare provider when and where you traveled.
- Your healthcare provider may order blood tests to look for Zika or other similar viruses like dengue or chikungunya.

## What should I do if I have Zika Virus?

- There is no specific medicine or treatment for Zika virus infection. Your doctor may advise rest and drinking plenty of liquids, and will recommend appropriate medication for pain and fever. Fortunately, Zika virus infection is self-limiting and resolves with supportive therapy.
- Complications are rare.

## Can you get Zika Virus twice?

- No; once you have had the Zika virus your body becomes immune to the disease.

## Is there a vaccine against Zika Virus?

- No vaccine or medications are available to prevent or treat Zika infections.

## How to reduce the risk of Zika Virus infection?

Do everything you can to:

- reduce mosquito breeding;
- keep mosquitoes out of your house; and, prevent them from biting.
- The mosquitoes that carry Zika virus are the same ones that carry chikungunya and dengue. The mosquitoes breed in anything which can hold water including discarded tyres,

tin cans, bottles, flower pots, storage jars, cooling systems and manhole covers.

- The mosquito can rest in and around houses, schools, hospitals and other areas where it is dark, cool and shaded.
- Prevent indoor mosquito bites by screening windows, keeping windows closed, sleeping under a bed net during the day, wearing long sleeve clothing during the day when these mosquitoes are most active, and by using repellents contains 30%-50% DEET (DEET is not recommended to use on children under 6 months of age) applied to exposed skin or clothing.

**Spend 10 minutes once a week to check around the house and yard to eliminate water sources that can provide breeding sites for mosquitoes.**

**You should also check for clogged gutters on roofs, and trim weeds and tall grasses.**



## For further information

Contact the Public Health Department at 244-2621 or 244-2561

### For advice on Mosquito Control

Mosquito Research and Control Unit  
Grand Cayman 949-2557 - Cayman Brac 948-2223

### Department of Environmental Health

Grand Cayman 949-6696 - Cayman Brac 948-2321