



# Zika Virus & Pregnancy Fact Sheet

## What is Zika virus?

Zika virus is spread by an infected daytime mosquito of the Aedes family. These mosquitoes are found in southern and some southeastern states of the United States (US), Mexico, Central and South America, and in the Caribbean. At this time, a majority of US cases reported are from returning travelers from outbreak countries. The Zika virus can also be spread by sex, mother to baby, and blood transfusions. Onondaga County does not have Aedes mosquitoes, so currently there is no risk for mosquito transmission of the Zika virus locally.

## Is it safe for a pregnant woman to travel to a country with ongoing transmission of Zika virus?

No, pregnant women should not travel to any area with Zika. If you must travel, it is recommended that you protect yourself against mosquito bites, both indoors and outdoors by using personal protection measures and practice safe sex. Once you return, consult your health care provider for testing, even if you have no symptoms.

## What is the effect of Zika virus infection on the pregnancy?

In the current outbreak, pregnant women infected with Zika virus can have fetal losses, poor pregnancy outcomes, and newborns with microcephaly (small head because of an underdeveloped brain). Zika virus infection can also cause Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a paralysis illness that can be severe and deadly.

## If a woman is not pregnant and is bitten by an infected mosquito, will her future pregnancies be at risk?

There is no evidence that the Zika virus can cause birth defects in future pregnancies. If you have recently traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission and if you are now trying to become pregnant, consult your health care provider.

## Is it safe for pregnant or nursing women to use insect repellent?

Using an insect repellent is safe. Pregnant women and those breastfeeding should use an EPA registered insect repellent. Follow the instructions on the product label.



## How can you protect yourself from getting the Zika virus?

If you must travel to areas with active ongoing Zika virus transmission use personal protection measures:

- Protect yourself against mosquito bites both indoors and outdoors.
- Stay in dwellings with intact screened windows and doors, and with air conditioning.
- Use insect repellent safely. Follow the instructions on the product label.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long sleeved shirts, and socks to cover exposed skin.

The Zika virus has been found in semen and vaginal fluid, so if you or your partner is from or has traveled to an area where the Zika virus is ongoing, be sure to use condoms throughout your pregnancy.

If you develop symptoms of the Zika virus (fever, joint pain, rash, red eyes) and have recently traveled, call your health care provider immediately.



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*For more information visit:*  
[www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/)