

March 4, 2016

ZIKA VIRUS GUIDANCE:

For members of the University of Nebraska community planning to travel abroad in the western hemisphere or pacific islands in 2016

The University of Nebraska is committed to ensuring the health and well-being of University of Nebraska students, faculty, staff and the community. The following information is intended to provide guidance to NU faculty, staff, students and their families regarding the current outbreak of Zika virus. For updated information on Zika virus and travel notices, please visit the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.

ZIKA VIRUS AND CDC TRAVEL ALERT:

The CDC has issued a travel notice (Alert Level 2-Practice Enhanced Precautions) regarding the spread of Zika virus because of its association with birth defects among infants born to infected pregnant women. Zika infections have been reported in Cape Verde, the Caribbean region, parts of Central and South America, Mexico, and certain Pacific Islands. The CDC's Alert Level 2 means that enhanced precautions should be taken by those traveling to affected regions. Additional information about the countries where Zika virus is spreading may be found at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>.

Zika virus is a mosquito-borne viral disease. Common symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for Zika virus disease is short--a few days to a week. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. People usually do not get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. Infection has been associated with a rare paralyzing complication and with a host of birth defects and adverse pregnancy outcomes after infection of pregnant women. Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for about a week but it can be found longer in some people. Zika virus can remain in semen for months.

TRANSMISSION:

Zika virus may be transmitted:

- By the Aedes mosquito – this is the primary means of transmission of the virus. The Aedes mosquito species which transmit Zika are predominantly tropical and sub-tropical mosquitoes and not the species typically found in Nebraska backyards;
- From mother to baby during pregnancy or around birth;
- Through sexual contact with a male partner infected by Zika virus.

PRECAUTIONS:

Because Zika virus is primarily spread by mosquitoes, the CDC recommends that travelers to the affected regions be especially vigilant about protecting themselves from mosquito bites.

The CDC recommends that travelers to affected regions take the following precautions:

- Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), or IR3535. Always use as directed. (Pregnant and breastfeeding women can use all EPA-registered insect repellents, including DEET, according to the product label.)
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). You can buy pre-treated clothing and gear or treat them yourself.
- Stay and sleep in screened-in or air-conditioned rooms.
- Practice safe sex (use condoms) if you have sex while traveling.

Additional Guidance for Women Who are Pregnant or Trying to Become Pregnant:

CDC Recommendations for Pregnant Women:

- Consider postponing travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing; if travel cannot be avoided, take steps to prevent mosquito bites during travel.
- If you have a male partner who lives in or has traveled to an area where Zika transmission is ongoing, either abstain from sex or use condoms consistently and correctly for the duration of your pregnancy.

CDC Recommendation for Women Trying to Become Pregnant:

- Talk with your doctor before traveling to an area with Zika virus outbreak regarding the risk of Zika virus infection and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during travel.

AFTER TRAVEL:

- Prevent additional mosquito bites for three weeks to avoid spreading the disease.
- Men who have traveled to an area with ongoing Zika transmission should consider using condoms consistently and correctly to protect their sexual partners.
- Men who have a pregnant partner should abstain from sexual activity (vaginal, anal, or oral) or consistently and correctly use condoms for the duration of the pregnancy.



IF YOU FEEL SICK AND THINK YOU MAY HAVE ZIKA VIRUS:

- Talk to your doctor or nurse if you develop a fever with a rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Tell him or her about your travel.
- Take medicine, such as acetaminophen or paracetamol, to relieve fever and pain. Do not take aspirin, products containing aspirin, or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen.
- Get lots of rest and drink plenty of liquids.
- Prevent additional mosquito bites to avoid spreading the disease.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- CDC, Zika Travel Information: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Fast Facts About Zika Virus: http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/newsroom_newsreleases_2016_february_zikafacts.aspx
- World Health Organization, Zika Virus: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>
- The Center for Preparedness, Zika Virus in the Western Hemisphere: <http://www.preped.org/?page=PublicHealthResource>
- University of Nebraska, Executive Memorandum No. 25: <http://nebraska.edu/docs/president/25%20Participation%20in%20Sponsored%20Travel%20to%20Countries%20with%20Travel%20Advisories.pdf>