

## Zika information for travelers

[Zika virus disease](#) is caused by infection with the Zika virus that is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes.

### **Transmission**

The most important mosquito vectors are those in the *Aedes (Stegomyia)* genus, mainly the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which bites during daylight hours. These mosquitoes also transmit dengue and chikungunya viruses. Zika virus is also transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy, and can be transmitted through sexual contact, transfusion of blood and blood products, laboratory exposure, and possibly through organ transplantation.

### **Nature of the disease/Clinical features**

The incubation period (the time from an infected mosquito bite or other exposure to the start of symptoms) of Zika virus disease is estimated to be 3–14 days. Most people infected with Zika virus do not develop symptoms. Among those who do, symptoms are generally mild and include rash, low grade fever, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache, and usually last for 2–7 days. These symptoms are common to other arboviral and non-arboviral diseases; thus, the diagnosis of Zika virus infection requires laboratory confirmation. Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of microcephaly (smaller than normal head size) and other congenital malformations in the infant, collectively referred to as congenital Zika syndrome.

### **Geographical distribution**

A total of [89 countries and territories](#) had documented evidence of autochthonous mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus, distributed across all regions except the Eastern Mediterranean region.

### **Risk for travelers**

In countries or areas at risk and affected by epidemics, or exposure through sexual transmission to an infected person who recently travelled to an area at risk. Women of reproductive age and pregnant women are at risk of adverse reproductive outcomes and should consider travel-related risks and consult with their health care provider to limit potential exposure to infected mosquitoes.

### **Prophylaxis**

There are no specific vaccines or antiviral treatments against Zika virus disease. Paracetamol can be taken to bring down fever.

### **Precautions**

Travellers should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites both during the day and at night (Chapter 3). This includes the use of insect repellents, wearing long sleeves and pants and ensuring rooms are fitted with screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering.

Because Zika virus can be transmitted sexually and poses the risk of adverse reproductive outcomes, travelers to areas with Zika virus transmission and partners of returning travelers to areas with transmission are advised to adhere to the [guidelines of the prevention of sexual transmission of Zika virus](#).