

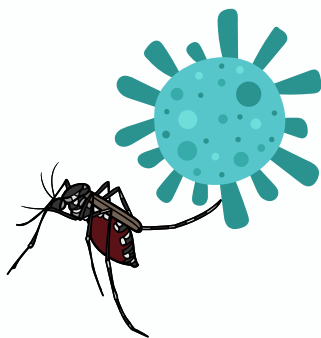
Fact sheet: Preventing Zika infection in pregnancy

Information for pregnant people who have travelled, or planning travel, to countries affected by Zika Virus

What is Zika?

Zika is a virus which can be spread to people by mosquito bites. Zika has been found in countries in Africa, Asia, the Western Pacific and the Americas. People who are pregnant, planning pregnancy, and their partners should avoid travelling to areas which have a high risk of Zika.

A map of Zika affected areas is available on the **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**: <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.htm>. Pregnant people should avoid travel to the dark blue areas on the map.



Why is Zika risky for pregnant people?

Zika is of greatest concern for pregnant people. This is because Zika can cause microcephaly and other birth defects in babies born to people who are infected during pregnancy.

Microcephaly is a birth defect in which a baby's head is smaller than expected and brain development can be severely affected.

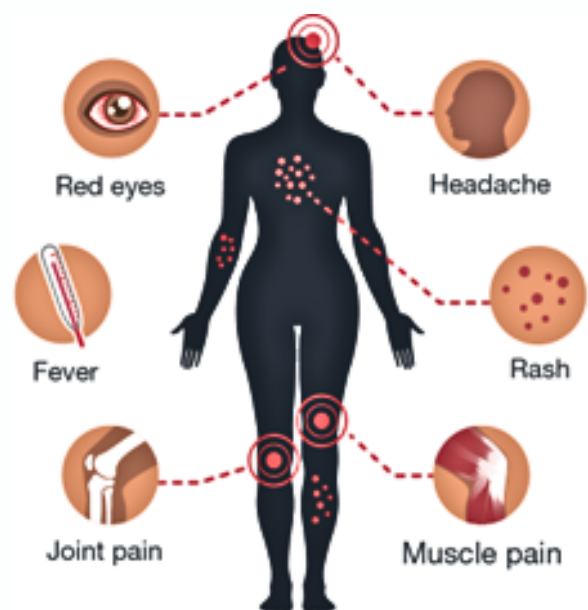


What are the symptoms of Zika?

Zika rarely causes serious illness in individuals. Many people with Zika won't have any symptoms. When symptoms do appear, they are usually mild and develop from 3 to 12 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes) and last 4 to 7 days.

Once a person has been infected with Zika, they are likely to be protected from future infections.



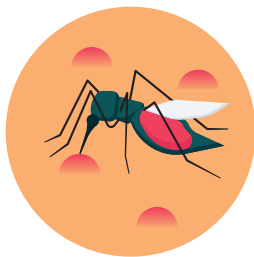
Further information about Zika can be found here:

- [Health Direct - Zika Virus](#)
- [Better Health Channel - Zika Virus](#)
- [US Centers for Disease Control - Zika Virus](#)

How does Zika spread?

Zika virus spreads to people mainly through the bite of an infected mosquito. Even though there has been no known spread of Zika in Australia by mosquitoes, some areas of northern Queensland have the mosquito that can spread Zika if they bite an infected returned traveller.

Zika can also be spread through sex. Only people with partners who live in, or travelled to an area with risk of Zika, are at risk for getting Zika through sex. Sex includes vaginal, anal and oral sex, and the sharing of sex toys.



How can Zika be avoided in pregnancy?

There is no vaccine or medicine to prevent or treat Zika infection. The best way to avoid Zika is not to travel to high-risk areas whilst pregnant or planning pregnancy. If travel to a high-risk area is unavoidable, talk with your doctor first and avoid mosquito bites during the day and night.

Pregnant people should also practice safe sex with partners who live in, or travelled to, a high-risk area for Zika for 6 months after last travel or for the duration of the pregnancy (whichever is completed first).

Condoms can reduce the risk of getting Zika from sex. To be effective, condoms should be used from start to finish, every time during vaginal, anal, and oral sex. This is important, even if your partner does not have symptoms of Zika.



What about testing?

Pregnant people with symptoms of Zika infection during or shortly after (within 2 weeks) travel to a Zika-affected area should talk with their hospital health care team or GP. They may be offered a test to look for Zika infection.



Any questions?

If you are unsure about anything in this fact sheet, please write down your questions below so you can ask your hospital health care team or GP.

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

Service:

Phone:

Email:

References:

1. CDNA: [Zika Virus infection – National guidelines for public health units](#)
2. NSW Health: [Zika virus infection fact sheet](#)
3. US CDC: [Preventing Zika](#)
4. US CDC Stacks: [Zika fact sheets](#)