

Zika Virus

Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Zika virus is not harmful in the overwhelming majority of people. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

In response, CDC has issued a travel alert (Level 2-Practice Enhanced Precautions) for people traveling to regions and certain countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. For a list of affected areas please see <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>. There have been reports of a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant.

Prevention

When traveling to countries where Zika virus or other viruses spread by mosquitoes are found, take the following steps:

- Use insect repellents.
- Repellents containing DEET products provide long lasting protection.
- If you use both sunscreen and insect repellent, apply the sunscreen first and then the repellent.
- Do not spray insect repellent on the skin under your clothing.
- Treat clothing with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated clothing.
- Always follow the label instructions when using insect repellent or sunscreen.
- When weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. If you are not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes inside your home or hotel, sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Women who are pregnant should consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Women who are trying or may become pregnant should consult with their health care provider before traveling.

Transmission

Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito. These are the same mosquitoes that spread dengue and chikungunya viruses. Mosquitos that spread Zika virus bite mostly during daytime hours. Although mosquito bites are the primary risk factor for infection, Zika can be passed through sex from a person who has Zika to their sex partner(s). Condoms and other barrier methods can reduce the chance of getting Zika from sex.

Treatment

- No vaccine or medications are available to prevent or treat Zika infections.
- Treat the symptoms:
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Take medicines, such as acetaminophen to relieve fever and pain.

Please contact your health care provider or Health Services if you develop symptoms and have traveled to an area where Zika is found.

Haverford College continues to monitor the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advisory regarding Zika virus. For more information on Zika virus, please visit www.cdc.gov/zika/

Students traveling to affected regions are encouraged to contact the Health Services.