



SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Zika Virus Information Student Health Services

As you know, outbreaks of Zika virus are impacting certain regions of the world, including the United States. So far, all cases of Zika in San Diego have been contracted while traveling to other areas. The San Diego County Department of Health & Human Services is vigilant and is working to minimize the risk of local transmission of Zika. Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites and through sexual contact. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes), although someone may not have all of these manifestations. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. Zika infection may rarely be followed by a nervous system disorder called [Guillain-Barre syndrome](#). If you are planning to visit an area where Zika is present or are having sex with someone who was diagnosed with Zika, it is important that you take steps to protect yourself. **Because infection with the virus during any time in pregnancy may cause serious birth defects or even death to the fetus, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is advising women who are pregnant to consider postponing travel to infected areas.** If you are trying to become pregnant or may become pregnant while abroad, it is important that you discuss the risks of Zika infection with your health care provider before you leave. SDSU Student Health Services is available to discuss these risks as well as pregnancy prevention if you would like assistance. **All** women who either are or become pregnant during their time in an infected area are strongly urged to seek medical care when they return. Eighty percent of people who become infected with the virus have no symptoms but their babies are still at risk.

What can travelers do to prevent Zika?

Before traveling check the CDC's list of [Zika-Affected areas](#) and review the tips below. Take time to visit the [Center for Disease Control & Prevention Travel Health Notices](#) site for more details about health risks in areas you may be traveling. The CDC has some other great [resources for traveler health](#). Don't forget to sign up with the U.S. State Department [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) which enrolls you with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your travel area and provides updates and notices related to health and safety.

There is no vaccine to prevent or medicine to treat Zika. Travelers can protect themselves by preventing mosquito bites:

- Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing 10-50% DEET or 20% picaridin. Guidelines for use to maximize effectiveness and minimize side effects were issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These are particularly important when using DEET-based repellents. Pregnant women can use all EPA-registered insect repellents, including DEET and picaridin, according to the product label.

APPLICATION TIPS:

- ✓ Use just enough repellent to lightly cover but not saturate the skin
- ✓ Repellents should be applied to exposed skin, clothing, or both, but not under clothing
- ✓ A thin layer can be applied to the face by dispensing repellent into the palms, rubbing hands together, and then applying to the face
- ✓ Repellent should be washed from the palms after application to prevent contact with the eyes, mouth, and genitals
- ✓ Do not use repellents over cuts, wounds, inflamed, irritated, or eczematous skin
- ✓ Do not inhale aerosols, spray them in enclosed spaces or near food, or get them into the eyes
- ✓ Do not apply insect repellent to the hands of small children, as it will inevitably be rubbed into the eyes
- ✓ Frequent reapplication of repellent is unnecessary

- ✓ The areas treated with repellent should be washed with soap and water once the repellent is no longer needed
- ✓ Protection is shortened by swimming, washing, sweating, wiping, exercise, and rainfall.
- 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. Wear clothing that reduces the amount of exposed skin such as long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Stay and sleep in screened-in or air-conditioned rooms. Sleep within bed nets treated with insecticide (e.g., permethrin).

What do I do if I feel sick and think I may have Zika?

- 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. Student Health Services providers are able to diagnose suspected Zika, and can send blood and urine samples to the San Diego County Health Department Laboratory for testing.
- 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.

What can I do to prevent contracting Zika from my sexual partner?

Zika can be passed through sex, even if the person does not have symptoms at the time. It can be passed from a person with Zika before their symptoms start, while they have symptoms, and after their symptoms end. Sex includes vaginal, anal, oral sex, and the sharing of sex toys. It is unclear how long Zika virus can remain in the body, but it seems to remain in the semen for longer than in vaginal fluids, urine, and blood. To reduce transmission from an infected sexual partner, CDC recommends the following:

- [Condoms](#) can reduce the chance of getting Zika from sex.
 - ✓ Condoms include male and female condoms.
 - ✓ Dental dams (latex or polyurethane sheets) may also be used for certain types of oral sex (mouth to vagina or mouth to anus).
- To be effective, condoms should be used from start to finish, every time during vaginal, anal, and oral sex.
- Not sharing sex toys can also reduce the risk of spreading Zika to sex partners.
- Not having sex eliminates the risk of getting Zika from sex.

Pregnant women with possible sexual exposure to Zika should be tested for Zika infection

See [CDC or more information on sexual transmission](#).

Should I be tested if I have just returned from an area where Zika virus is present?

A pregnant woman who has lived in or traveled to an area with Zika should be tested. However, there is no recommendation to test otherwise healthy individuals. Of course, if you are concerned, please consult your health care provider.

Where can I get the most up-to-date information on Zika?

Both the [CDC](#) and [World Health Organization](#) have extensive information on Zika. You can also speak with your Student Health Services physician, nurse practitioner, or nurse or health plan provider.

How can I reduce the chance of mosquitos breeding near my home?

While mosquitoes in San Diego do not currently transmit Zika, they can transmit West Nile Virus. For information on how to control them, see [Fight the Bite](#).