



ZAP THE ZIKA VIRUS

With news of the spread of the Zika virus in tropical regions of the globe, it's only natural for people to be concerned. While the virus is not being spread locally at this time, the mosquitoes that transmit the virus make their home in some popular travel destinations. Reports of the virus being linked to the serious birth defect microcephaly have increased anxiety among women of child bearing age.

Mosquitoes become infected with the Zika virus when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. Therefore it is best to eliminate mosquito breeding sites and avoid mosquito bites.

To zap the Zika virus, Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission and the Ho-Ho-Kus Board of Health reminds you to follow these suggestions.

To eliminate mosquito breeding sites:

Remove standing water from around your home. It only takes a bottle cap's worth of standing water to cause a mosquito breeding site. Common culprits that should be monitored regularly for standing water include:

- Clogged rain gutters
- Bird baths
- Corrugated drain pipes
- Pet bowls
- Trash and recycling bins
- Flower pots
- Tire swings
- Children's toys

To reduce the risk of being bitten by a mosquito:

- When practical, wear long pants and long sleeves. Loose fitting, light colored clothing is best. Permethrin is an insecticide and insect repellent used for additional protection. This product is applied to clothing and outdoor gear, not skin.
- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent. Registered products have been reviewed, approved, and pose minimal risk for human safety when used according to the label.

If you have a baby or child:

- Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
- Dress your child in clothing that covers arms, legs, or cover crib, stroller and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
- Do not apply insect repellent on a child's hands, eyes, mouth, cut or irritated skin.
- Adults should spray the repellent onto your hands and then apply to the child's face.

The Zika virus can also be spread through sexual activity. The CDC recommends that men who live in or have traveled to an area where Zika is found and who have a pregnant partner should abstain from sexual activity or consistently and correctly use condoms during sex throughout the entire pregnancy.

If you are planning on traveling, please log onto www.cdc.gov/zika/geo to see if your destination is currently experiencing ongoing Zika transmission. Please speak with your health professional if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant before travel.

NWBRHC reminds you to frequent reputable sources to obtain information. Reputable websites include:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov

Pan American Health Organization: www.paho.org

New Jersey Department of Health: www.state.nj.us/health/

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Zika Facts:

Updates from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention: as of 6/13/16

- The mosquitos that spread the Zika virus—*Aedes aegypti*—are aggressive daytime biters but can also bite at night. *Aedes aegypti* may also spread Chikungunya and Dengue.
- The incubation period—time from bite to Zika infection—is 3-7 days
- 1 in 5 people infected with the Zika virus do not know they have the disease because they either have no symptoms or the symptoms are too mild to notice.
- If present, the most common Zika symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes) and may also include muscle pain and headache. Symptoms may last several days to a week.
- During the first week of infection, the Zika virus can be found in a person's blood. If a (non-infected) mosquito bites the person, that mosquito then becomes infected with the Zika virus. The newly infected mosquito can then bite other people and spread Zika
- To help prevent the spread of Zika, infected persons should take precautions against mosquito bites during the first week of illness or after their return from travel.
- The Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for about a week, sometimes more.
- The virus remains longer in semen than in blood and can be transmitted to a partner via unprotected sex.
- The Zika virus can spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus and has been linked to a serious birth defect, microcephaly. Pregnant women should delay travel to areas with Zika.
- There is now no vaccine to prevent or any specific medication to treat a Zika infection
- Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.