

Zika Virus

Zika is a virus transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. It is similar to many other mosquito-borne viruses, such as Dengue fever, yellow fever and West Nile virus. Zika virus was first discovered in Uganda, Africa in 1947. In May of 2015, it was detected in the Americas for the first time. Since then, it has contributed to over a million suspect cases in over 32 countries in Central, South and North America.

Local vs. Imported?

Imported cases are those acquired during travel to an area where the virus is actively circulating. A case that is imported into Louisiana does not mean that virus activity is occurring here. Local cases occur when the virus is picked up locally. To date, no local cases of Zika virus have been detected in Louisiana.

What Are Zika Symptoms?

The majority of individuals (about 80%) who become infected will not show any symptoms. Symptoms are generally mild and include fever, joint pain, conjunctivitis and rash. Neurological complications or death are extremely rare. There is no specific treatment for Zika.

If you are concerned you may have Zika, contact your physician. It is also extremely important to protect yourself from mosquitoes to prevent transmission to other individuals.

What Is the Concern?

The current concern regarding Zika virus is the potential link between infection during pregnancy and having a child born with microcephaly (reduced brain size). The virus also has been linked to Guillain-Barre syndrome, a condition in which the immune system attacks the peripheral nerves.

If you are pregnant or plan on becoming pregnant, you should consult the CDC Zika website for more information: www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy.

How Is the Virus Transmitted?

The most common way Zika virus is transmitted is through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes (in particular, container mosquitoes) are capable of picking up virus from an infected person and passing it to an uninfected person. People also may be infected through sexual contact or from mother to fetus.

What Are Container Mosquitoes?

Container mosquitoes, such as the Asian tiger mosquito and the yellow fever mosquito, are the two most important vectors of Zika virus that occur in our area. These mosquitoes lay eggs in backyard containers (buckets, trash cans, tires, bottles, etc.). All immature stages are spent in water. Adult container mosquitoes will bite at all times of the day and aggressively bite humans and domestic animals.

What Can I Do to Protect Myself and My Family?

1. Create barriers between you and mosquitoes.

Create barriers indoors by making sure window and door screens are repaired, and have at least 22 meshes per linear inch. Container mosquitoes are often smaller than other species and can squeeze through larger mesh sizes. Outdoors, wear long sleeves and long pants that are lightly colored. Another trick is to wear two layers, to further prevent bites through clothing.

2. Select EPA-registered repellents; follow label instructions.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends repellent products that contain active ingredients which have been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA evaluates products for efficacy towards mosquitoes and their effects on humans. Always apply according to label instructions.

3. Reduce mosquitoes in your backyard.

Container mosquitoes lay eggs in backyard containers, close to where people live. These species usually do not fly far from where they lived as immatures. When people are bitten by these mosquitoes, it usually means that the source of standing water is nearby. Use the Quick Control Chart below to help reduce mosquitoes in your backyard.

4. Support your local mosquito control program.

Many mosquito control programs in Louisiana use an integrated mosquito management approach, meaning they use multiple control strategies that have the lowest possible effects on the environment as possible. These great programs have a deep understanding of biology and survey the environment before making appropriate mosquito control decisions.

QUICK CONTROL GUIDE

Habitat Type	How to Correct
Buckets and watering cans	Store indoors, or turn over when not in use.
Old tires	Recycle or store indoors.
Bird baths, potted plants with saucers	Change water weekly.
Trash (bottles, cans)	Clean up trash, check yard weekly.
Tarps	Make sure they do not collect water.
Children's toys	Store indoors or in a way that does not collect water.
Trash cans	Cover; drill holes in the bottom.
Roof gutters and extensions	Keep clear of debris; make sure extensions angle downward and do not collect water.



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