

Zika Virus and Family Planning Including CDC Recommendations

August 21, 2019

Zika Virus Is Still A Concern

Zika virus in pregnancy can result in miscarriage and fetal abnormalities. Zika virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito. It can also be passed from mother to fetus, by blood transfusion or by contact with infected semen. It is believed to be transmitted sexually by vaginal, anal, or oral route. Eighty (80) percent of patients infected with Zika do not have clinical symptoms. Certain countries and areas are considered to be at higher risk for Zika transmission than others. Before making any travel plans, please refer to the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/zika or the MotherToBaby website at www.MotherToBaby.org for the most updated information and known affected countries and areas. These designated risk areas may also change over time.

The interactive world map from for CDC uses colors to show different levels of Zika risk. See www.cdc.gov/travel/page/world-map-areas-with-zika .

- Travelers to **RED** areas are **at risk** of Zika infection.
- Travelers to **PURPLE** areas **might be at risk** of Zika infection.
- Travelers to **YELLOW** areas are **at low risk** of Zika infection.
- Travelers to **GREEN** areas are **not at risk** of Zika infection.

Travel and Planning Pregnancy:

- Those planning pregnancy and their partners who travel to **RED** areas should **wait at least 2 months and men should wait at least 3 months before trying to get pregnant, having only protected sex during that time.**
- Those planning pregnancy and their partners are encouraged to talk to their health care providers to make decisions about traveling to **PURPLE** areas. If you should decide to travel to a **PURPLE** area, **take steps to minimize risk including insect repellent and consider following the recommended wait times before trying to get pregnant (2 months for women and 3 months for men).**
- Those planning pregnancy and their partners should **take steps to avoid mosquito bites in YELLOW areas.**
- There are **no Zika related precautions** for **GREEN** areas.

Travel and Pregnancy:

- **Pregnant women and their partners should avoid all unnecessary travel to RED areas.**
- Pregnant women and their partners are encouraged to talk to their health care providers to help make decisions about traveling to **PURPLE** areas. If you should decide to travel to a **PURPLE** area, **take steps to minimize risk including using insect repellent and considering the use of condoms for the rest of the pregnancy.**
- Pregnant women and their partners should **take steps to avoid mosquito bites in YELLOW areas.**
- There are **no Zika related precautions** for **GREEN** areas.

Suspected Zika Viral Disease (Any Zone): refers to those with clinical symptoms of Zika (see below) or documented Zika by blood or urine testing. (Please note that 80% of patients infected with Zika do not have clinical symptoms.)

For women: the recommendation is to avoid pregnancy for eight (8) weeks from symptom onset. The CDC recommends the use of a condom or to abstain from sex during this time period.

For men: the recommendation is to avoid attempting pregnancy for a period of 3 months after symptom onset. The CDC recommends the use of a condom or to abstain from sex during this time period.

ZIKA Background Information:

Zika can be transmitted sexually both before symptoms start and after symptoms resolve. The time period for exposure to the infection and symptoms of Zika virus is thought to be 3-14 days. The virus itself is believed to last 1 to 2 weeks in the blood. However, it is unknown how long the virus can stay in the male reproductive system (semen) or in a pregnant mother. Typical symptoms include two or more of the following: fever, rash, joint pain, muscle aches, red eye and headache. Guillian-Barre syndrome (when a patient's immune system attacks the peripheral nervous system) is also thought to be associated with Zika infection. However, please note that 80% of patients infected with Zika have no clinical symptoms. In pregnant patients, miscarriage, fetal microcephaly (small head often associated with a small brain and intellectual disability), fetal brain and eye abnormalities have been reported.

Center for Advanced Reproductive Services (CARS) Recommendations:

- Choose to travel to **YELLOW** or **GREEN** Zones whenever possible.
- Before making travel plans, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/zika or MotherToBaby website at www.mothers-to-baby.org for updated Zika information and affected risk areas.
- Contact the (free service) MotherToBaby program for any questions or concerns regarding Zika, medications, or exposures, etc. during preconception (pre-pregnancy), pregnancy or breastfeeding for expert updated information and answers. Phone 866-626-6847 or text 855-999-3525 (standard messaging rates may apply).
- Follow recommended ZIKA CDC guidelines as stated above regarding travel to **RED and PURPLE ZONE** areas.
- If travel is necessary to any Zika risk level area, use precautions to minimize exposure including wearing appropriate clothing (for example long sleeves), using approved mosquito repellants (for example repellants containing DEET) and adopting a life style to minimize the risk of infection (for example staying in air-conditioning or screened in areas. See MotherToBaby Fact Sheet for insect repellants at www.MotherToBaby.org.
- If travel is necessary to a **RED** Zika area, sperm freezing and banking at our center prior to travel to Zika affected **RED** areas is recommended. This will permit you to continue infertility treatment with unaffected frozen sperm.

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