




United States Department of the Interior
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington DC 20240

Memorandum

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To: Solicitor
Inspector General
Bureau and Office Heads

Attn: Senior Executive Emergency Management Council
Bureau and Office Emergency Coordinators

From: Director, Office of Emergency Management
/s/ Lisa A. Branum 

Subject: DOI Zika Virus Information – Memorandum #1

As of February 22, 2016, the local transmission of Zika virus has been reported in the U.S. Territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and American Samoa, as well as in Mexico, Caribbean, and Central and South America. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) elevated the Travel Health Notices for Zika Virus to Alert Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions for countries with ongoing Zika virus transmission.

While there have not been any locally transmitted cases in the Continental United States to date, there have been multiple cases where people have become infected from traveling in areas with Zika virus. This memo is being issued to inform you of the risks of Zika to U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) employees, volunteers, and visitors to DOI lands and to DOI facilities. It has been developed in conjunction with public health experts at the National Park Service as part of a collaborative and coordinated effort within the Department to provide basic information.

Background

The Zika virus is a disease transmitted to people by infected mosquitoes through the *Aedes* species (*Aedes aegypti* and *Ae. Albopictus*). *Aedes* mosquitoes are endemic in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam and American Samoa. *Aedes* mosquitoes are also established in the continental United States, as far north as Iowa and New York, west to Texas, and in scattered areas of California, Arizona and New Mexico. This type of mosquito typically breeds in domestic water-holding containers, and is an aggressive daytime biter that feeds both indoors and outdoors near dwellings.

Transmission

The Zika virus remains in the blood of an infected person for about a week, but in some people it may be longer. During the first week of infection, the virus can be passed from an infected person to a mosquito through a mosquito bite. The infected mosquito can then spread the virus to other people. In a small number of cases the Zika virus has been transmitted sexually and through blood transfusions.

Prevention

Persons traveling to or residing in areas of active Zika virus transmission should take steps to prevent infection through prevention of mosquito bites such as:

- Applying insect repellents containing DEET (preferably 20 - 30% DEET), picaridin, IR3535 and some oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol products provide longer-lasting protection. If using both sunscreen and insect repellent, apply sunscreen first.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Wearing permethrin-treated clothing, but DO NOT treat skin with permethrin.
- Using bed nets, window/door screens, and/or air conditioning, as appropriate.
- Emptying standing water from outdoor containers (e.g., flowerpots, tires, tarps).
- Pregnant women should discuss their male partner's potential exposures to mosquitoes and history of Zika-like illness with their health care provider.

Signs and Symptoms

- 4 out of 5 people (80%) who are infected with the Zika virus do not experience any symptoms.
- The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis (red eyes), muscle pain and headache.
- The illness is usually mild; symptoms typically last several days to a week.
- People very rarely die of Zika.

Additional Concerns for Women

The Zika virus is suspected of producing microcephaly, a birth defect affecting the brain and skull, and other neurological disorders in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. Pregnant women can be infected with Zika virus in any trimester.

The CDC recommends that all pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. If a pregnant woman travels to an area with Zika virus transmission, she should be advised to strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites.

Diagnosis

If you develop the symptoms described above and have recently visited or live in an area where the Zika virus is found, consult with your doctor. A preliminary diagnosis is based on symptoms, travel history and or area of residence. Specialized blood tests are used to confirm the diagnosis of Zika virus.

Treatment

Currently, no vaccine or medication exists to prevent or treat Zika virus infection. When Zika virus does cause illness, symptoms are generally mild and do not require medical treatment. Care should be focused on relieving the symptoms and includes:

- Getting plenty of rest and drinking fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) to relieve fever and pain.

DOI Zika Virus Information

DOI employees are encouraged to visit the DOI Office of Emergency Management website which contains Bureau-specific guidance, as available, and links to key CDC resources at: <https://www.doi.gov/emergency>, or visit the CDC Zika website directly at: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika> for more information. Additional guidance and information on Bureau-specific needs and concerns may be issued as well. To obtain more information, please contact CDR Elaine Bond, Public Health Planner for DOI Office of Emergency Management at 202-208-5417 or Elaine_Bond@ios.doi.gov.