

Zika virus

Zika is a primarily mosquito-borne viral infection caused by a *Flavivirus* (related to West Nile, dengue and yellow fever viruses). Zika virus was first discovered in 1947. Before 2015, sporadic outbreaks were reported in Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. In spring 2015, Brazil reported an outbreak, resulting in the rapid spread of Zika in the Western hemisphere. By early 2016, Zika had continued to spread and concern heightened for the virus's effects on pregnant women and their infants. In response to the outbreak, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC). As control measures were implemented and the number of cases declined, the EOC was deactivated in late 2017.

Zika infection is primarily caused by mosquito bites but can be spread through sexual transmission and blood transfusions. Additionally, a pregnant woman can pass Zika virus to her fetus during pregnancy.

In Oregon, there is no evidence of mosquito transmission; the typical vectors, *Aedes albopictus* and *Aedes aegypti*, are not native to Oregon. However, these mosquitoes do live just over the border in California.

Zika infection was considered a mild, self-limiting illness with the most common symptoms reported as fever, rash, headache, joint pain and conjunctivitis. Four of five individuals are asymptomatic. However, Zika infection during pregnancy can cause birth defects, including microcephaly and other neurological abnormalities. Initial reports also identified an increased risk of developing Guillain-Barré syndrome, a neurological disorder that can cause muscle weakness and paralysis. Treatment for Zika infection is supportive; no vaccine exists.

Due to the concerns of birth defects among infants born to Zika-infected mothers, the CDC recommended testing pregnant women who do not have symptoms. The CDC also established the U.S. Zika Pregnancy Registry to monitor Zika-infected pregnant women and their infants for the first year of life.

Six cases of Zika virus disease were reported among Oregon residents in 2017, a significant decrease from the 49 cases reported in 2016. This decrease reflects trends seen in the United States and globally in regions where Zika outbreaks had occurred. Due to testing of pregnant women, two additional individuals were identified who had laboratory evidence of Zika virus but did not present with any Zika-compatible symptoms. All cases or their sexual partners reported foreign travel. Most cases traveled to areas with active Zika transmission in the Americas, including Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

Prevention

- The best way to prevent Zika is to protect yourself from mosquitoes:
 - › Use mosquito repellent.
 - › Wear long sleeves, long pants, shoes and socks when outside.
 - › Avoid outdoor activities when more mosquitoes are out — at dawn, dusk.
- You can also prevent Zika transmission by using condoms or avoiding sex after returning from travel for eight weeks or six months for females and males, respectively.
- If you are pregnant:
 - › Do not travel to any area with a risk of Zika virus infection.
 - › If travel is unavoidable, avoid mosquito bites and unprotected sex with others in the affected area.
 - › Avoid sex or use condoms for the duration of the pregnancy if you or your partner recently visited a Zika-affected area.
- Individuals with symptoms of Zika or laboratory evidence of Zika infection should avoid donating blood for six months.