



Zika Virus Information

Over the past year, Zika virus has become widespread in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. The spread of the virus has caused concern because of a possible linkage to a rare birth defect, microcephaly.

The virus is primarily transmitted to people through mosquito bites, but may also be transmitted sexually. In most cases, the virus causes either no symptoms or only a slight illness that typically lasts from several days to a week. Fever, rash, conjunctivitis (red eyes), and joint pain are signs of infection.

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika virus, nor is there medicine to treat it. Common steps taken to prevent mosquito bites can help reduce the risk of contracting the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that travelers to countries where Zika virus have been reported use insect repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, and stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens (wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites).

The virus poses a particular risk to women thinking about becoming pregnant or who are pregnant and their male partners. The CDC advises women in this situation to postpone any travel to certain destinations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Men who have traveled to these areas should understand the risks that they may transmit the virus to their partners.

International travelers should visit a travel clinic at least six weeks before departure to learn about country-specific recommendations to prevent illness, including needed vaccines and medications. For more information, students should contact the Student Health Service at 715-836-4311 to schedule a **Travel Consult**.

Faculty and staff members can contact their primary care provider to find a travel clinic in their community.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/zika.