

If you work or spend a lot of time outdoors, there is a greater chance that you could be bitten by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite an infected person who has traveled to or resides in a country or area with ongoing Zika transmission, including those who regularly cross the U.S.-Mexico border.

Zika Transmission

- Mosquito bites are the primary way that Zika virus is transmitted.
- The virus can be spread from mother to child during pregnancy and at delivery.
- Spread of the virus through blood transfusion and sexual contact has also been reported.

Even if you don't know you're infected, mosquitoes that bite you could transmit the virus to others.

- An infected human could potentially transmit the virus to mosquitoes for 3 weeks after exposure.
- The mosquito takes a blood meal from the infected human and takes in the virus in the human's blood.
- After about 7-10 days, the mosquito may pass the Zika virus to other humans when biting them.

Not all mosquitoes transmit the Zika virus.

- It is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito (*Ae. aegypti* and possibly *Ae. albopictus*).
- These mosquitoes prefer to bite people, live indoors and outdoors near people, are mainly active during the daytime and to a lesser extent at night, and can transmit virus day or night.
- The female mosquito lays her eggs on the walls of water-filled containers inside and outside the house like buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots, and vases.

Zika Infection and Disease (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/symptoms/symptoms.html>)

Many people infected with Zika virus won't have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms, which usually develop within 2 weeks of exposure. The most common symptoms of Zika are rash, fever, joint pain, and/or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other symptoms may include muscle pain and headache. Although rare, the Zika virus may also be among the causes of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a condition in which your immune system attacks part of your nervous system.

The symptoms may last for several days to a week. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected.

Zika virus may be detected in the blood or urine of an infected person for about 2 weeks after their illness develops. See your doctor or other healthcare provider if you develop symptoms and you live in or have recently traveled to an area with local Zika transmission. Your doctor or other healthcare provider may order blood tests to look for Zika or other similar viruses like dengue or chikungunya. Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections.

Sexual contact

The Zika virus can be spread through sexual contact between infected persons and their sex partners.

- It can be passed from a person with Zika before their symptoms start, while they have symptoms, and after their symptoms end.
- Though not well documented, the virus may also be passed by a person who carries the virus but never develops symptoms.
- The Zika virus can remain in semen longer (up to 6 months) than in other body fluids, including vaginal fluids, urine, and blood.
- CDC recommends that all pregnant women who have a sex partner who has traveled to or resides in an area with Zika use barrier methods, e.g. condoms, every time they have sex, or they should not have sex during the pregnancy.
- Although no cases of woman-to-woman Zika transmission have been reported, these recommendations now also apply to female sex partners of pregnant women.

Preventing Mosquito Exposure

When you're outside:

- Use insect repellents with an EPA-registered active ingredient, such as: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol, or 2-undecanone. Repellents must be reapplied throughout the day according to label directions. Insect repellents with 25-30% DEET can provide longer lasting (e.g. 5-8 hours) protection (<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you>).
- Permethrin can be applied to clothing and gear. Follow the label instructions.
- Wear clothing that covers your hands, arms, legs, and other exposed skin. This can include hats with mosquito netting and socks to cover your ankles.
- If also using sunscreen, apply it before applying insect repellent.
- In warm weather, wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing. Take additional steps to prevent heat-related illnesses (such as, drink additional water and take rest breaks).

Improve your outdoor settings:

- Remove standing water in cans, bottles, buckets, tires, wheel barrows or any container that can hold water.
- Cover trash cans or containers where water can collect.

Additional recommendations to protect outdoor workers from Zika are included in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Factsheet "Zika: Protecting Outdoor Workers" available at http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/outdoor/mosquito-borne/pdfs/zika_outdoorworker_factsheet.pdf.