PRECONCEPTION COUNSELING

For Women and Men Living in Areas with Ongoing Spread of Zika Virus Who Are Interested in Conceiving

This guide describes recommendations for counseling women and men living in areas with Zika who want to become pregnant and have not experienced clinical illness consistent with Zika virus disease. This material includes recommendations from CDC's updated guidance[1], key questions to ask patients, and sample scripts for discussing recommendations and preconception issues. Because a lot of content is outlined for discussion, questions are included throughout the sample script to make sure patients understand what they are being told.

Recommendation	Key Issue	Questions to Ask	Sample Script
Assess pregnancy intentions	Introduce importance of pregnancy planning	*Have you been thinking about having a baby?* *Would you like to become pregnant in the next year?* *Are you currently using any form of birth control?*	If you are thinking of having a baby, I would like to help you have a healthy and safe pregnancy. With the Zika virus outbreak, planning pregnancy is more important than ever. Preparing and planning for a healthy pregnancy means getting as healthy as you can before becoming pregnant, and also taking the time now to learn about how best to care for yourself during pregnancy.
Assess risk of Zika virus exposure	Environment	*Do you have air conditioning in your home? At work?* *Do you have window and door screens in your home? At work?* *Do you have a bed net? Would you consider using one?* *Do you live in an area with a lot of mosquitoes?*	The best way to prevent Zika is to prevent mosquito bites. To protect yourself at home and work, use air conditioning if possible. Install window and door screens and repair any holes to help keep mosquitoes outside. Sleep under a bed net, if air conditioning or screened rooms are not available. Since you live in an area where Zika is spreading, you are at risk of getting Zika. It is important that we discuss the timing of your pregnancy, and ways to prevent infection when you are pregnant. **Knowledge check:** What are some ways to protect yourself at home and work?
	Personal measures to prevent mosquito bites	*Are you willing to wear clothes that cover your skin, like long pants and long-sleeved shirts?* *Do you dip or spray your clothes with permethrin or wear permethrin-treated clothing (specially treated clothing to keep mosquitoes away)?*[2] *Do you use insect repellents throughout the day and night? How often do you reapply? Are you following the directions on the label?* *Do you have standing water near or around your home or workplace?* *Do you empty standing water you find near your home?*	Now and throughout your pregnancy, you and your partner should take important steps to protect yourselves from getting Zika. Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants protects your arms and legs. Treating clothing with permethrin adds another layer of protection, just don't put it directly on your skin. Use EPA-registered insect repellents with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. These insect repellents are safe to use during pregnancy. Always follow the product label instructions and use as directed. This includes reapplying throughout the day as directed on the product label instructions. Help reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home by emptying standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, discarded tires, and birdbaths on a regular basis. **Knowledge check:** How would you describe the steps to protect yourself from mosquito bites?
	Personal measures to prevent sexual transmission	*After you become pregnant, are you and your partner willing to either use condoms or not have sex for the duration of your pregnancy?*	Zika virus can also be transmitted through sexual contact. Your partner might be bitten by a mosquito and become infected with Zika, and then he could infect you. Most people who get infected with Zika virus don't get sick, so your partner might not have any symptoms of Zika. While you're trying to get pregnant, its important to protect yourselves from mosquito bites. Once you know you're pregnant, you and your partner should use a condom the right way, every time you have vaginal, anal, or oral (mouth-to-penis) sex or you should not have sex while you are pregnant. **Knowledge check:** How can you protect yourself from sexual transmission?

References:
1. Petersen EE, Polen K, Meaney-Delman D, et al. Update: Interim Guidance for Health Care Providers Caring for Women of Reproductive Age with Possible Zika Virus Exposure—United States, 2016. MMWR . 2016.

2. In some places, such as Puerto Rico, there is widespread permethrin resistance and it should not be used.

Recommendation	Key Issue	Questions to Ask	Sample Script
Discuss Zika virus infection in pregnancy	Signs and symptoms of Zika virus disease	*Do you know the signs and symptoms of Zika?* *Do you know when to see the doctor or other healthcare provider if you think you may be infected?*	Most people with Zika won't know they have it. But for those that do get symptoms, they usually get a mild illness with fever, rash, joint pain or red eyes. The illness usually lasts about a week. If you get sick with symptoms and you're pregnant, you should see a healthcare provider for testing right away. Since you live in an area with Zika, we'll test you at your first prenatal care appointment, and we can also offer testing during the second trimester to help check for any signs of infection. **Knowledge check:** What are the signs and symptoms of Zika? What should you do if you think you may be infected?
	Possible adverse outcomes of Zika virus infection during pregnancy	*Have you heard about Zika? Do you know the risks of getting Zika during pregnancy?* *Do you know why it's so important for you to prevent mosquito bites and protect yourself during sex?*	For pregnant women, the concern is that Zika virus can be passed to the fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth. Infection with Zika virus during pregnancy has been linked to a birth defect called microcephaly and other problems with brain development. Children with microcephaly often have serious problems with development and can have other neurologic problems, such as seizures. Other problems seen in pregnancies with Zika virus are miscarriage, stillbirth, and a spectrum of other poor health outcomes, including problems with infants' vision. This is why it's so important to protect yourself during your pregnancy. **Knowledge check:** Why is it important to protect yourself during pregnancy?
	Unknown duration of the outbreak		There is still a lot we don't know about Zika. We don't know how long this outbreak will last, so it's really important that you keep protecting yourself throughout the pregnancy. Scientists are working to make a vaccine to protect people from Zika.
Explore reproductive life plan	Talk about importance of thinking about and developing a plan	*How old are you?* *Have you been pregnant or had children before?* *How old do you want to be when you start and stop having children? How many children do you want?* *How does pregnancy fit in to your life right now (e.g., school, work)?* *For more questions to consider, see http://www.cdc.gov/preconception/documents/reproductivelifeplan-worksheet.pdf*	There are many factors to consider when deciding to get pregnant. I would like to help you reach your goals for building a family. This includes helping you avoid pregnancy when you do not want to be pregnant and helping you have a safe, uncomplicated pregnancy when you are ready to have children.
Discuss risks & benefits of pregnancy at this time with woman & partner		*What are your thoughts about what we've discussed?* *Do you have any questions?* *Is there any more information you need right now to help with choices or family planning?*	Given the risks of Zika to pregnant women and infants, we need to consider if now is the right time for you to get pregnant. This is a very personal decision. I want you to know that I'm here to help you and answer your questions. We can also talk about this more if you have further questions or if new information about Zika becomes available.
If pregnancy is not desired now, discuss contraceptive options	Contraception	*Are you currently using birth control?* *What type of birth control do you prefer to use?*	If you decide that now isn't the right time for you to have a baby, I can help you find the birth control for you that is safe, effective, and works for you and your life. Let's work together to find the most effective option for you and your partner. *(see graphic on next page for more information)*

For more information, see CDC's Zika virus website: www.cdc.gov/zika

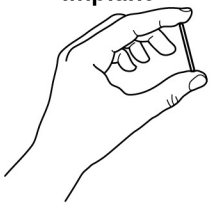
Effectiveness of Family Planning Methods

Most Effective

Less than 1 pregnancy per 100 women in a year

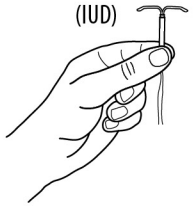
Reversible

Implant



0.05 %*

Intrauterine Device (IUD)



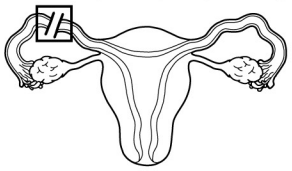
LNG - 0.2 % Copper T - 0.8 %

Permanent

Male Sterilization (Vasectomy)

0.15 %

Female Sterilization (Abdominal, Laparoscopic, Hysteroscopic)



0.5 %

How to make your method most effective

After procedure, little or nothing to do or remember.

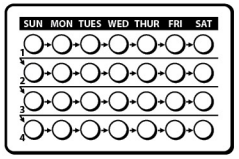
Vasectomy and hysteroscopic sterilization: Use another method for first 3 months.

6-12 pregnancies per 100 women in a year

Injectable

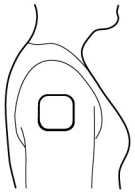
6 %

Pill



9 %

Patch



9 %

Ring

9 %

Diaphragm

12 %

Injectable: Get repeat injections on time.

Pills: Take a pill each day.

Patch, Ring: Keep in place, change on time.

Diaphragm: Use correctly every time you have sex.

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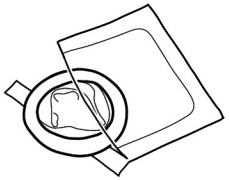
18 or more pregnancies per 100 women in a year

Male Condom

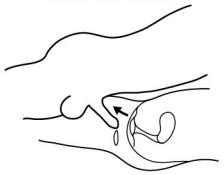


18 %

Female Condom

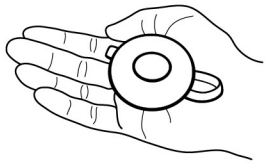
21 %

Withdrawal



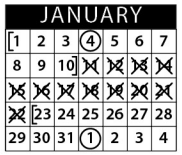
22 %

Sponge



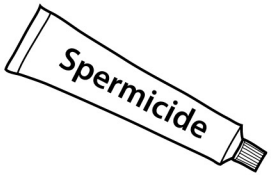
24 % parous women
12 % nulliparous women

Fertility-Awareness Based Methods



24 %

Spermicide



28 %

Condoms, sponge, withdrawal, spermicides: Use correctly every time you have sex.

Fertility awareness-based methods: Abstain or use condoms on fertile days. Newest methods (Standard Days Method and TwoDay Method) may be the easiest to use and consequently more effective.

Least Effective

* The percentages indicate the number out of every 100 women who experienced an unintended pregnancy within the first year of typical use of each contraceptive method.

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CONDOMS SHOULD ALWAYS BE USED TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS.

Other Methods of Contraception

Lactational Amenorrhea Method: LAM is a highly effective, temporary method of contraception.

Emergency Contraception: Emergency contraceptive pills or a copper IUD after unprotected intercourse substantially reduces risk of pregnancy.

Adapted from World Health Organization (WHO) Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs (CCP). Knowledge for health project. Family planning: a global handbook for providers (2011 update). Baltimore, MD; Geneva, Switzerland: CCP and WHO; 2011; and Trussell J. Contraceptive failure in the United States. Contraception 2011;83:397–404.

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