

Counseling Travelers

Women and Men of Reproductive Age Who are Considering Travel to Areas with Active Transmission of Zika Virus (ZIKV)



This guide describes recommendations to providers for counseling women and men of reproductive age who are considering travel to areas with active ZIKV transmission. This material includes recommendations from CDC's interim guidance¹ and talking points to cover while discussing recommendations.

Recommendation	Key Issues	Talking Points
Assess risk of ZIKV exposure and prevention	Environment	<p>Discuss whether Zika is being spread by mosquitoes in the planned area of travel (see CDC Zika Travel Information website[*]).</p> <p>Discuss environment in which patient will be staying: advise traveler to stay in hotel rooms or other accommodations that are air conditioned or have good window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.</p> <p>Discuss mosquito bite prevention, including insect repellent, clothing (including permethrin-treated²), and bed net use.</p>
Discuss ZIKV infection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Signs and symptoms of ZIKV disease Treatment When to seek care Preventing transmission after returning home 	<p>Many people infected with ZIKV won't have symptoms or will have only mild symptoms. The most common symptoms of ZIKV disease are fever, rash, arthralgias, and conjunctivitis; other common symptoms include myalgia and headache.</p> <p>Illness usually lasts about a week.</p> <p>ZIKV infection during or just before pregnancy may cause poor pregnancy and infant outcomes, including birth defects.</p> <p>Guillain-Barré syndrome is possibly triggered by ZIKV in a small proportion of infections, as it is after a variety of other infections.</p> <p>People who have possibly been exposed and develop symptoms consistent with ZIKV disease should see a healthcare provider and report their recent travel.</p> <p>If travelers develop symptoms of ZIKV disease, they should rest, stay hydrated, and take acetaminophen for fever or pain. To reduce the risk of hemorrhage, aspirin or other NSAIDs should not be taken until dengue can be ruled out.</p> <p>When travelers return from an area with ZIKV, they should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks if they have no symptoms of ZIKV disease (or for the first week after onset if they develop symptoms) so they do not pass ZIKV to mosquitoes that could spread the virus to the community.</p>
Discuss ZIKV infection and pregnancy	Possible adverse outcomes of ZIKV infection during pregnancy	<p>ZIKV can be passed to the fetus during pregnancy or at delivery if a woman is infected around the time of conception or during pregnancy.</p> <p>ZIKV infection during pregnancy can cause microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects.</p> <p>Children with microcephaly often have serious problems with development and can have other neurologic problems, such as seizures.</p> <p>ZIKV has been linked to other problems in pregnancies and among fetuses and infants infected with ZIKV before birth, such as miscarriage, stillbirth, defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth.</p> <p>There is no evidence that ZIKV infection poses an increased risk for birth defects in future pregnancies after the virus has cleared from the blood.</p>

Recommendation	Key Issues	Talking Points
Assess pregnancy plans related to timing of travel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timing of conception 2. Avoiding travel to areas of active ZIKV transmission while pregnant 	<p>CDC recommends that women who are pregnant not travel to any area with active ZIKV transmission.</p> <p>If a pregnant woman must travel to one of these areas, discuss potential risks and the steps she should take to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.</p> <p>If a traveler is planning to try to conceive either while traveling or after returning, there are important recommendations s/he needs to be aware of, including waiting to conceive. There are different recommendations for women and for men based on whether or not they develop symptoms consistent with ZIKV disease during or after travel (see table below).</p>
Discuss ZIKV infection – risk of sexual transmission and need for contraception	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preventing sexual transmission 2. Contraception 	<p>ZIKV can also be transmitted through sex with a male partner.</p> <p>Men might be bitten by a mosquito and become infected with ZIKV and then infect their sex partners.</p> <p>Patients should be advised to take the following steps to protect themselves from sexual transmission of ZIKV:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a man develops symptoms of ZIKV disease, he should use a condom the right way, every time he has vaginal, anal, or oral (mouth-to-penis) sex or should not have sex for 6 months after illness starts. 2. If a man does not develop symptoms of ZIKV disease, he should still use condoms for at least 8 weeks after the last date of exposure (the last day he is in an area with active ZIKV transmission) to avoid sexual transmission to his partner. This is especially important if he has any plans to try to conceive with his partner after returning from travel. <p>To avoid conceiving for the advised periods of time (see table below), a woman or couple should also use the most effective contraceptive methods that can be used correctly and consistently (See <i>Effectiveness of Family Planning Methods</i>: http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/unintendedpregnancy/pdf/contraceptive_methods_508.pdf).</p>

Length of time to wait to conceive after travel to areas with active Zika virus transmission

One or more symptoms of ZIKV disease (fever, rash, arthralgia or conjunctivitis)	Female traveler	Male traveler
Yes	Wait at least 8 weeks after symptom onset to try to conceive	Wait at least 6 months after symptom onset to try to conceive with partner
No	Wait at least 8 weeks after last date of exposure to try to conceive	Wait at least 8 weeks after last date of exposure to try to conceive with partner

Related websites:

Zika Virus - <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

* Zika Travel Information - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>

Guillain-Barré Syndrome - <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/about/gbs-qa.html>

Zika Virus Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/index.html>

For Providers Caring for Women with Possible ZIKV Exposure - <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/qa-pregnant-women.html>

Zika Transmission & Risks - <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/transmission/index.html>

Zika Symptoms, Diagnosis & Treatment - <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/symptoms/index.html>

**** For updates, please check <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/index.html>; updated clinical guidance is marked as “UPDATE” ****

References:

1. Petersen EE, Polen KN, 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 65(12)315-22.
2. In some places, such as Puerto Rico, there is widespread permethrin resistance, and it is unlikely to be effective. Contact local authorities or a mosquito control district for more information on pesticides.