

Zika Virus Fact Sheet

What is Zika Virus?

Zika Virus disease is caused by a virus transmitted primarily by Aedes mosquitoes, which bite during the day, however there is a small risk of it being passed on through sexual contact, blood transfusion and organ transplantation.

What are the symptoms (if any)?

The incubation period of Zika virus is believed to be 3-14 days, although most people with a Zika virus infection show no symptoms.

Symptoms are generally mild and can include a rash, conjunctivitis, high temperature, headache or muscle and joint pain for 2-7 days.

How is it treated?

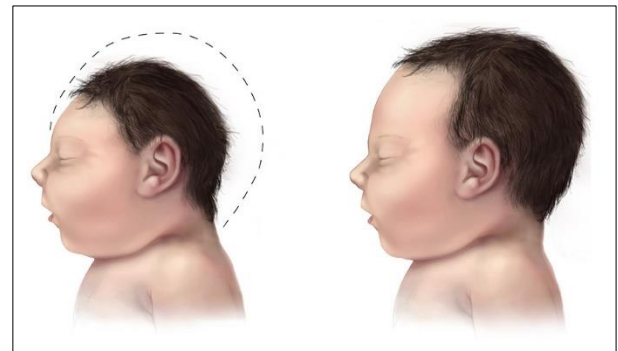
A diagnosis of Zika virus infection can only be confirmed by laboratory tests of blood or other bodily fluids, such as urine or semen.

There is currently no treatment available for Zika virus infection or its associated diseases. Instead, there is an emphasis on prevention for persons living or visiting affected areas.

This includes protecting oneself against mosquito bites during the day and early evening. Special attention should be given to prevention of mosquito bites among pregnant women, women of reproductive age and young children.

What happens if you do not get treated?

Zika virus can be harmful to pregnant women. It can cause infants to be born with microcephaly (smaller than normal head size) and other congenital malformations, known as congenital Zika syndrome.



Side view illustration of a baby with microcephaly (left) compared to a baby with typical head size

Infection with Zika virus is also associated with other complications of pregnancy, including preterm birth and miscarriage. Zika virus infection is also a trigger of Guillain-Barre syndrome, neuropathy and myelitis, particularly in adults and older children.

Research is ongoing to investigate the effects of Zika virus infection on pregnancy outcomes, strategies for prevention and control, and effects of infection on other neurological disorders in children and adults.

Better2Know Testing Information

You should get a PCR test for Zika virus immediately on experiencing any symptoms or wait 14 days or more after symptoms subside for antibody testing.

A diagnosis of Zika virus infection can only be confirmed by laboratory tests of blood or other bodily fluids, such as urine or semen.

Pregnant women living in areas with Zika transmission, those who have visited associated areas or who develop symptoms should seek medical attention, laboratory testing and other clinical care.

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