



# Tarrant County Public Health

## *Safeguarding Our Community's Health*

### The Facts about Zika Virus

#### **What is Zika?**

Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

#### **How is Zika transmitted?**

Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. These are the same mosquitoes that spread dengue and chikungunya viruses, and are common across Tarrant County. They are aggressive daytime biters, who live indoors and outdoors near people. The mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus.

#### **What are the symptoms of Zika?**

About one in five people infected with Zika virus become ill. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Other symptoms include muscle pain, headache, pain behind the eyes and vomiting. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. The symptoms of Zika are similar to those of dengue and chikungunya, diseases caused by other viruses spread by the same type of mosquitoes.

#### **What are the complications from this disease?**

Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. Deaths due to Zika are rare.

#### **Who is at risk?**

A mother already infected with Zika virus near the time of delivery can pass on the virus to her newborn around the time of birth, but this is rare. In theory, Zika virus could be spread through blood transfusion. There has been one report of possible spread of the virus through sexual contact.

#### **How is the disease treated?**

There is no medicine to treat Zika. Symptoms can be treated like the Flu. Patients are encouraged to get plenty of rest, drink fluids to prevent dehydration, and to take medicines (such as acetaminophen) to relieve fever and pain. Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of hemorrhage.

#### **How can I be protected from Zika virus?**

Use approved insect repellents containing DEET to provide long lasting protection. When weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home by dumping standing water.

For more information, call 817-321-4700 or visit <http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

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*A nationally accredited health department*

