



## SUBJECT : Zika Virus

### What is Zika virus and where did it come from?

Zika is a virus that is transmitted to people through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito (daytime tropical mosquito). This is the same mosquito that transmits dengue and chikungunya. It's not new, as it was first documented in parts of Africa and Asia in the 1950s.

The virus has recently begun to spread, finding its way into the Americas for the first time. Countries include the following:

Brazil	Guatemala	Puerto Rico
Colombia	Haiti	Paraguay
Ecuador	Honduras	Saint Martin
El Salvador	Martinique	Suriname
French Guiana	Mexico	Venezuela
Guyana	Panama	

### How dangerous is it?

Zika is thought to be relatively harmless. The vast majority of those infected never show symptoms. In those who do, the virus typically causes a mild illness (called Zika); marked by a mild fever, rash, muscle pain and red eyes.

The incubation period of Zika virus ranges from 3 to 12 days. The disease symptoms are usually mild and last for 2 to 7 days. Most people recover fully without severe complications, and hospitalization rates are low. Zika virus infection may go unrecognized or be misdiagnosed as dengue, chikungunya or other viral infections causing fever and rash.

### What about the birth defects?

In the last year, doctors in Brazil have been noticing a still-unproven link between Zika and a sudden 20 per cent spike in babies being born there with underdeveloped heads -- a condition called microcephaly.

Validating the link is difficult, especially since other regions that have experienced Zika outbreaks have not reported increases in microcephaly.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has not issued any travel warnings related to Zika, but it has advised pregnant women to “discuss their travel plans with their health care provider to assess their risk” of contracting Zika.

These women should also take measures to protect themselves against daytime and nighttime mosquito bites.

### **Is there a vaccine for Zika?**

There is no vaccine to protect against Zika infection, nor is there any particular way to treat an infection.

### **What are some prevention measures?**

Mosquito bite prevention is the best way to avoid infection. Please refer to Safety Bulletin CSSI 14-04 – *Insect Bite Prevention*.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Information regarding Zika can be found on the Public Health Agency of Canada website:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2016/zika-eng.php>



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