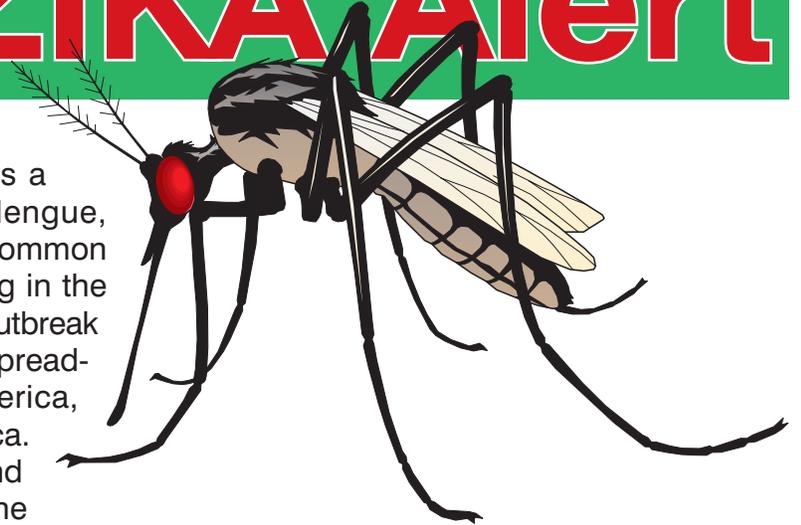


DC 37 Safety and Health: **ZIKA Alert**



What is Zika Virus? The Zika virus is a mosquito-transmitted infection related to dengue, yellow fever and West Nile virus. The virus is common in Africa and Asia and did not start spreading in the Western Hemisphere until May 2015 when an outbreak occurred in Brazil. Currently, the Zika virus is spreading primarily in the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, the Pacific Islands and South America. The mosquito that carries this virus can be found in the United States but no local mosquito-borne

transmissions of Zika have been reported here in the U.S. There have been U.S. residents infected with the virus while traveling abroad in the countries where the virus is spreading rapidly.

How likely is it that I will be infected with the Zika virus in NYC? NYC's health commissioner, Dr. Mary Bassett, has said that there is virtually no risk of someone contracting the Zika virus in the city at this time because the species of mosquito spreading the disease does not live in the region. The cases that have been reported in NYC were a result of recent travel to an affected country.

In addition to this, New York City has a robust infrastructure to track and kill the species of mosquito that carries the virus. This infrastructure is well established following concerns in the past regarding the spread of West Nile virus.

What are the symptoms? The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis. People normally do not get sick enough to go to the hospital and very rarely die of Zika. In fact, most people infected with the virus show no symptoms at all. Only about 1 in 5 people infected with Zika will become sick. The symptoms are normally mild and last for several days to a week. In most cases recovery involves only rest, nourishment and basic supportive care.

How are people infected? Zika is spread by the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. Mosquito bites can be prevented by wearing long sleeved shirts and pants and using Environmental Protection Agency registered insect repellents. Currently, the best preventative measure is to avoid all areas where the Zika virus is spreading.

Pregnancy and the Zika Virus: The CDC currently warns pregnant women and women who are trying to become pregnant, against travel to many countries, mostly in the Caribbean and Latin America following reports of an association between the Zika virus and microcephaly, a condition in which babies are born with unusually small heads and neurological problems. Women who are pregnant and recently travelled to a region where the Zika virus is transmitted should consult with a doctor.

What next? DC 37 will continue to monitor the situation and keep you informed. Visit us at www.dc37.net or follow us on Facebook and Twitter. For general safety and health questions, please call 212-815-1685.

For more information visit the Center for Disease Control's website: www.cdc.gov/zika

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