

Zika Virus

What You Need to Know



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What Precautions can I Take in Relation to Zika Virus and Pregnancy?

What is Zika Virus?

Zika is a virus transmitted to humans primarily via mosquitoes. This virus is closely related to dengue fever. It is not a new virus and has now emerged in countries in South and Central America, with spread to limited areas in North America. The Zika virus is also present in Asian countries, including tourist destinations in Thailand, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. No specific treatment or vaccine is available at present. The best form of prevention is protection against mosquito bites.

Signs and Symptoms

If an infection occurs, it may take 3-12 days before there is any sign of symptoms, which are usually mild and require no specific treatment. The symptoms are similar to other virus infections such as the flu and include fever, skin rash, and muscle and joint pain. These symptoms normally last between 2 and 7 days. People affected should drink plenty of fluids, rest, and treat fever with common medicines. If symptoms worsen, seek medical advice.

Will I be Affected?

People living in or visiting countries where there is a current active outbreak of Zika virus may be at increased risk of infection.

Zika Virus and Pregnancy

According to the Australian Department of Health, recent outbreaks in the Pacific and Central and South America have raised concerns that Zika might cause certain birth defects if a woman contracts the virus while pregnant, but further studies are required to prove this and to understand how and when it may be passed on to the baby.

If you are pregnant or hoping to conceive, avoid travel to countries of concern. If you cannot avoid travel to these areas, protect yourself by taking measures to prevent mosquito bites.

If you are pregnant and have recently travelled to an area where there is ongoing Zika virus transmission, or where it was being transmitted at the time of your travel, you should discuss this with your doctor.

World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines recommend that women who have travelled to such a country defer pregnancy until 8 weeks after the last day they were there. If any symptoms arise, see your healthcare professional for advice.

Sexual transmission of Zika virus has been documented in several countries. Men who have travelled to a country where there is ongoing Zika virus transmission and have a pregnant partner should abstain from sexual activity or use condoms consistently for the duration of the pregnancy. Men who have had a confirmed Zika virus infection and have a partner who is not pregnant should abstain from sexual activity or use condoms consistently for 6 months after all symptoms have disappeared.

How can Zika Virus be Diagnosed?

Infection with Zika virus may be suspected based on symptoms and recent history (e.g. residence in or travel to an area where the virus is present). Diagnosis can only be confirmed by laboratory testing for Zika virus RNA in the blood or other body fluids, such as urine or saliva. All results will be reviewed by your doctor.

Can I Travel?

This is a rapidly evolving situation and areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing are difficult to determine and likely to change over time. The Australian Department of Health provides continuous updates and risk categories for Zika virus-affected countries. For updates, please refer to smartraveller.gov.au.

The Zika virus is a changing situation, so protect yourself, stay informed, be vigilant and seek advice from your GP or fertility doctor as required.

Sources

- » smartraveller.gov.au
- » www.who.int/topics/zika/en/
- » www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-zika.htm

For the latest updates and information on the Zika virus, please refer to:

- » The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: smartraveller.gov.au
- » The World Health Organisation: www.who.int/topics/zika/en/

The Australian Department of Health:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-zika.htm

Where to Now?

Get a referral from your GP to one of our accredited specialists to book a fertility health check.

Contact Us

Call 1300 354 354
Email contactus@cityfertility.com.au
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