

ZIKA VIRUS

What do I need to know about the Zika virus?

By: Ari Frenkel, M.D.

The Zika virus is spread through the bite of a mosquito. Sexual transmission has now been reported as well. Common symptoms include fevers, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis. Symptoms are similar to the better known Dengue virus, although milder. Symptoms can last for several days to a week and is self limiting. It is rare that hospitalization will result from this type of infection.

The Zika virus is now making headlines due to large outbreaks as well as the reported risk to pregnant women which results in babies with birth defects. There have also been reports of Guillain Barre' Syndrome.

As per the latest information provided by the CDC, the Zika virus has not been transmitted within the United States. Cases of Zika virus have been reported in returning travelers within the United States. Countries with reports of Zika virus transmission include Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. Zika virus is now seen in Brazil as well. In addition, cases have been reported in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa. Other specific locations are published at the CDC's website.

Prevention of the Zika virus simply involves measures in avoidance of mosquito bites. For more information and for the latest updates, please visit the CDC's website.

Ari Frenkel, M.D.
Infectious Disease Specialist
ECM Hospital