

### Zika Virus Infection

Zika virus infection (Zika) is a mosquito-borne disease caused by Zika virus. The incubation period is not clear, but is likely to be a few days to a week. Persons being infected may develop fever and skin rash, usually accompanied by conjunctivitis, muscle or joint pain and general malaise. These symptoms are usually mild and last for a few days. Neurological and autoimmune complications have been reported, but are infrequent. Besides, the relationship between microcephaly in babies and Zika is still under investigation.

### Mode of transmission

Zika virus is mainly transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito. Zika virus can also be transmitted through blood, but this is an infrequent mechanism.

### Prevention

At present, there is no effective vaccine against Zika. To prevent Zika, travellers are advised to:

- Protect themselves from mosquito bites
  - Wear loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved tops and trousers, and use DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed parts of the body and clothing
  - Re-apply insect repellents according to instructions
  - Avoid using fragrant cosmetics or skin care products during outdoor activities
- Travellers, including women preparing for pregnancy, going to areas with past or current evidence of ongoing Zika virus transmission (affected areas) should arrange a consultation with doctor before the journey
- Pregnant women should consider deferring their trip to the affected areas
- During the trip, strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites
- If travelling in rural areas of countries where Zika or other vector-borne diseases have been reported, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin (an insecticide) on it. Permethrin should NOT be applied to skin. Seek medical attention as early as possible if feeling unwell
- Travellers who return from affected areas and feel unwell, e.g. having fever, should seek medical advice as soon as possible, and provide travel details to doctor

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