



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Mississippi State Department of Health Zika Virus and Mission Trips

A large outbreak of Zika virus is occurring in many countries in Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. Zika virus is mainly transmitted by mosquitoes but can sometimes be spread sexually. It causes a relatively mild illness characterized by fever, rash, red eyes or joint aches, but 80% of cases may be asymptomatic. Rarely Zika can cause a paralytic illness called Guillain-Barre syndrome. Zika is also associated with devastating neurologic damage to babies during pregnancy, most clearly seen in a recent outbreak of microcephaly (“small brain”) in Latin America. For more details on Zika please visit the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.

Individuals who travel to countries with ongoing transmission are encouraged to take the following precautions:

Before travel

- **Pregnant women, or women planning to get pregnant, should not travel to affected countries or areas.**
- Anyone (both men and women) traveling to an affected area should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito exposures during the trip (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites>).
- If pregnant women or women planning to get pregnant must travel, they are encouraged to talk to their obstetrician first, and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito exposures during the trip.

After return

- To prevent spreading Zika virus to local mosquitoes, all returning travelers should take every measure possible to avoid mosquitoes for the 3 weeks after returning to Mississippi.
 - Stay indoors as much as possible.
 - If they do go outside for any length of time, use DEET containing mosquito repellent and wear long sleeves if possible.
- Returning travelers should not donate blood for at least 4 weeks after return from affected country
- To prevent sexual transmission, returning travelers should avoid unprotected sex for 2-6 months (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/transmission/sexual-transmission.html>).
- Pregnant women should avoid unprotected sex with any returning male partner for the duration of the pregnancy.

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