

Zika Virus and But God Ministries

Most people are aware of the Zika virus that is spreading throughout parts of South America, Central America, North America, and the Caribbean Islands. This would include the country of Haiti.

Please go to <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/> for the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control.

The Zika virus is similar to the chikungunya virus that swept through the Caribbean islands a year or two ago. Both viruses are arthropod-borne viruses (arboviruses) transmitted principally by mosquitoes. The primary difference appears to be that the effects of the Zika virus may be more severe for pregnant women.

General Information from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). ***The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.***

Symptoms (CDC)

- About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become ill (i.e., develop Zika).
- The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for Zika virus disease is not known, but is likely to be a few days to a week.
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week.
- Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for a few days but it can be found longer in some people.
- Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.
- Deaths are rare.

Treatment (CDC)

- No vaccine or medications are available to prevent or treat Zika infections.
- Treat the symptoms:
 - Get plenty of rest.
 - Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.

- Take medicine such as acetaminophen to relieve fever and pain.
- **DO NOT** take aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), like ibuprofen and naproxen. Aspirin and NSAIDs should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of hemorrhage (bleeding). If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.

Pregnancies and Future Pregnancies (CDC)

- There are reports in Brazil of microcephaly and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. However, additional studies are needed to further characterize this relationship. More studies are planned to learn more about the risks of Zika virus infection during pregnancy.
- Until more is known, CDC recommends that pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to the areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.
- Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for only a few days to a week. The virus will not cause infections in an infant that is conceived after the virus is cleared from the blood. There is currently no evidence that Zika virus infection poses a risk of birth defects in future pregnancies.
- Pregnant women should avoid unprotected sex (without a condom) with a man who has traveled to a Zika affected country, for the entire duration of the pregnancy. (Miss. State Dept. of Health)
- Men who travel to Haiti should, upon return to the States, use a condom for at least three months when having sex with a woman who could become pregnant.

Precautions while in Haiti:

- There is no vaccine for the virus; thus, we are taking several precautions.
- We encourage every team member to put on generous amounts of mosquito repellent in the morning and throughout the day, especially adding more repellent during the evening hours.
- We encourage team members to wear long pants and long sleeves.
- In the Thoman Hope Center, we have mosquito nets for every bed. Nets are not necessary in the Galette Chambon Hope Center because the ceilings are closed, rather than open as in Thoman.
- Until further notice, we do not allow any pregnant women going on one of our trips to Haiti.

Summary

At BGM, we are aware of the concerns surrounding the Zika virus. We dealt with similar issues regarding the chikungunya virus a year or two ago. All of the information we currently have leads us to four primary conclusions: (1) pregnant women or women considering becoming pregnant shortly after a trip should not go on one of our trips, (2) because the Zika virus has been found in semen 62 days after men have returned from Zika affected countries, men who travel to Haiti should, upon return to the States, use a condom for the duration of their partner's pregnancy, (3) because the Zika virus has been found in semen 62 days after men have returned from Zika affected countries, men who travel to Haiti should, upon return to the States, use a condom for at least three months when having sex with a woman who could become pregnant, and (4) all others who go on one of our trips should take precautions through proper clothing and generous amounts of mosquito repellent.