

ZIKA VIRUS

Updated January 2016

What is Zika virus?	This is a disease caused by the Zika virus (ZIKV), transmitted by mosquitoes of the genus <i>Aedes</i>
Where did it come from?	This virus was first isolated in 1947 from rhesus monkey samples, in the Zika forest in Uganda. The virus was named after the region where it was first collected.
How is Zika virus transmitted?	The main route of transmission is through the bite of the <i>Aedes aegypti</i> mosquito. About 4 days (can be 3-12 days) after being bitten by an infected mosquito the patient can start to exhibit the first signs and symptoms.
What are the main signs and symptoms of a Zika virus infection?	Zika virus is a little known disease and its description is limited to a number of case reports and outbreak investigations reports. Zika virus infection may present with few or no symptoms. In general, disease symptoms are mild and short-lasting (2-7 days). Where present, they are similar to symptoms of dengue and chikungunya, and may include fever, joint and muscle pain, conjunctivitis (red eyes), retro-orbital pain, headache, weakness, rash, swelling of the lower limbs and to a lesser extent vomiting, diarrhoea or abdominal pain.
Is there a treatment or vaccine for Zika virus?	There is no specific medicine or treatment for Zika virus infection. Your doctor may advise rest and drinking plenty of liquids, and will recommend appropriate medication for pain and fever. There is no vaccine for Zika virus yet. Fortunately, Zika virus infection is self-limiting and resolves with supportive therapy. Complications are rare, and no deaths have been reported
How severe is the disease?	While Zika symptoms are generally mild, there is now growing concern that Zika infection may have adverse effects on pregnant women and their babies. Although a clear link has not been established, pregnant women are advised to exercise extra precaution in avoiding mosquito bites during pregnancy.
What can I do to protect myself and my family?	<p>Prevention and control measures are the same as for dengue and chikungunya.</p> <p>Do everything you can to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce mosquito breeding; • keep mosquitoes out of your house; and, • prevent them from biting. <p>The mosquitoes that carry Zika virus are the same ones that carry chikungunya and dengue. The mosquitoes breed in anything which can hold water including discarded tyres, tin cans, bottles, flower pots, storage jars, cooling systems and manhole covers. The mosquito can rest in and around houses, schools, hospitals and other areas where it is dark, cool and shaded.</p> <p>Spend 10 minutes once a week to check around the house and yard to eliminate water sources that can provide breeding sites for mosquitoes. You should also check for clogged gutters on roofs, and trim weeds and tall grasses.</p> <p>Prevent indoor mosquito bites by screening windows, keeping windows closed, sleeping under a bednet during the day, wearing long sleeve clothing during the day when mosquitoes are most active, and by using repellents applied to exposed skin or clothing.</p>
If I am bitten, how do I prevent other members of my family from becoming infected?	If you are infected, you should avoid being bitten by the <i>Aedes</i> mosquitoes during the first week of illness. Staying under a bednet, or remaining in a place with intact window/door screens is recommended. Also protect against mosquito bites by using insect repellent and wearing long sleeves and pants.

CARPHA HEAD OFFICE
 16-18 Jamaica Blvd
 Federation Park, Port of Spain
 Trinidad and Tobago
 T: +1-868-299-0820
 E: postmaster@carpha.org

