

Notice on the Zika Virus Outbreak

The World Health Organization (WHO) International Health Regulations Emergency Committee has declared the Zika virus a global public health emergency requiring an urgent, united response from health organizations around the globe. <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/zika/en/>

Which countries are affected?

The Zika virus was originally found in areas of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. In May, 2015, the first confirmed Zika infection was documented in Brazil. Currently, outbreaks are occurring in many countries including Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Saint Martin, Suriname, U.S. Virgin Islands, Venezuela, Samoa and Cape Verde. Affected area updates are found on the CDC website.

How is Zika spread?

People can contract Zika by being bitten by an infected Aedes species mosquito – the same type of mosquito that spreads dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for pregnant women, advising them to protect themselves if their male sexual partner has travelled to or lives in an area where Zika virus is circulating. <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

Diagnosis of Zika virus infection

Zika virus usually causes mild or no signs of illness, with symptoms appearing a few days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. People with Zika virus disease may report a mild fever and rash. Others may also get conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, and feel tired. The symptoms usually end within two to seven days.

If you feel sick and think you may have Zika:

- Talk to your doctor or nurse if you develop a fever with a rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Tell him or her about any recent travel.
- Medicine, such as acetaminophen or paracetamol, may be used to relieve fever and pain. Do not take aspirin, products containing aspirin, or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen.
- Get extra rest and drink plenty of liquids.
- Try to prevent additional mosquito bites.

Diagnosis is usually based on a patient's symptoms and recent history (e.g. mosquito bites and travel to an area where Zika is known to be present). Laboratory testing of blood may be able to confirm the diagnosis depending on the timing of the testing.

What is Aetna International doing?

Aetna International constantly monitors reports of all infectious diseases, including Zika. Aetna International is in contact with the CDC, U.S. federal agencies, state and local health departments, health care providers, medical evacuation providers, and others so that we can appropriately promote awareness and prevention. Aetna International reviews the clinical policies for the most current evidence-based coverage criteria and works with health care providers to reduce barriers to the timely delivery of health care services. <https://www.aetnainternational.com>