



## Zika Virus Disease

### Definition:

Zika virus is transmitted primarily through the bite of infected *Aedes* species mosquitoes. The mosquitoes that can carry Zika virus are not currently found in Maine. However, these mosquitoes are present in a large area of the United States.

### Signs and symptoms:

For most children and adults, Zika virus infection will not cause symptoms or will only cause mild symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, maculopapular rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. Symptoms can last for several days to a week. Zika virus infection in childhood has not currently been linked to developmental delays or impaired growth.

### Transmission:

Zika virus is spread primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito, through sexual contact, or from a pregnant person to their fetus. Zika virus is not passed directly from person to person through casual contact.

Specific areas where local mosquitoes are infected with Zika virus are often difficult to determine and are likely to change over time. The US CDC Travelers' Health website has the most recent travel information:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-information>

### Diagnosis:

Zika infection can only be diagnosed by a healthcare provider and is based on a person's recent travel history, symptoms, and test results. A blood or urine test can confirm a Zika infection.

### Role of the School Nurse:

#### Prevention

- Students travelling to and returning from areas where local mosquitoes are infected with Zika, should take efforts to reduce exposure to mosquitoes, including:
  - Draining artificial sources of standing water
  - Covering exposed skin
  - Using EPA approved repellents
  - Avoiding being outdoors during the hours when mosquitoes are most active; this may include rescheduling sporting practices/games and other outdoor events
- To protect against all arboviral illnesses, school nurses should encourage the use of EPA approved repellents when outside (following local policy guidelines). School nurses can apply repellent with parental permission.
- Zika virus infection during pregnancy is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes and certain birth defects; therefore, special considerations for preventing exposure might be needed for pregnant students or staff and their sexual partners.
  - Students and staff can prevent sexual transmission of Zika by using barrier methods such as internal or external condoms or not having sex.
  - People who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant in the next three months should not travel to areas with current Zika outbreaks. Pregnant persons and people planning to become pregnant in the next three months should talk to a doctor before traveling to areas without a current outbreak, but with past or current spread of Zika.

### **Treatment Recommendations**

- If symptoms are noted, the student should be referred to his or her primary care provider for evaluation.
- There is no specific treatment for Zika virus disease. People with mild infections usually recover on their own. Health care providers can provide supportive therapy to patients with severe infections.

### **Exclusions**

- There are no recommended exclusions for removing students or staff members who have Zika virus disease or who were exposed to Zika virus, or to cancel school-related activities because of Zika virus concerns.

### **Reporting Requirements**

- Zika virus infections are reportable within 48 hours of recognition or strong suspicion of disease.

### **Resources:**

- US CDC. Zika Virus Page. <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>
- US CDC. Zika Communication Toolkits. <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/comm-resources/toolkits.html>
- Insect Repellent Finder (including time of protection)  
<http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/index.cfm#searchform>
- Maine CDC Zika Virus website: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/zika/index.shtml>