



DATE:	May 5, 2016
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Karen Murphy, PhD, RN, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Zika Virus: Risk Reduction Guidance
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	Statewide
COUNTY:	Statewide
MUNICIPALITY:	Statewide
ZIP CODE:	Statewide

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, INFECTION CONTROL, NURSING, AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Since January 1, 2016, a total of 17 cases of Zika virus infection have been reported among Pennsylvania residents. In each of these cases, exposure to the virus occurred during travel outside the continental United States. Additional travel-associated Zika virus infections among Pennsylvania residents are expected.

The purpose of this advisory is to provide health care providers in Pennsylvania with current recommendations to reduce the risk of locally-transmitted Zika virus infections as summer approaches and mosquito activity begins to increase. Despite the low risk of locally-transmitted mosquito-borne Zika virus infections in Pennsylvania, it remains a possibility. Additionally, other potential modes of transmission should be recognized and patients counseled appropriately.

Zika Virus Prevention Messaging

- Preventing transmission through **mosquito bites**:
 - Most Zika virus infections are transmitted through infected *Aedes* mosquito bites. One species, *Aedes albopictus*, is common in Pennsylvania, particularly in southern Pennsylvania. Actionable measures the public can take to prevent mosquito bites and reduce breeding areas include:
 - Use EPA-registered mosquito repellants with one of the following: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or para-menthane-diol.
 - Treat clothing and gear with permethrin (but do not apply to skin).
 - Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks and shoes if needed.
 - Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches and patios.
 - Drain water accumulating in objects around the home: garbage cans, gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots, etc.
 - Discard objects not in use around home such as old tires, bottles, cans, etc.
 - Empty and clean bird baths at least once per week.
 - Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated.
 - Persons with recent infection or exposure to Zika virus may contain virus in their blood and could serve as a source of virus to local mosquito populations:
 - Persons with potential exposure to Zika virus (such as travel to a Zika-affected area) who have not developed symptoms should take enhanced measures to prevent mosquito bites for **3 weeks** after last exposure.
 - Persons with exposure to Zika virus who develop symptoms should take enhanced measures to prevent mosquito bites during **first week** of illness.
- Preventing transmission from **mother to child**:
 - A woman with Zika virus infection can pass Zika virus to her fetus during pregnancy or near the time of delivery.
 - Men with Zika virus exposure who develop symptoms should wait at least **6 months** after symptoms resolve before having unprotected sex.
 - Women with Zika virus exposure who develop symptoms should wait at least **8 weeks** after symptoms resolve before attempting pregnancy.
 - Women and men with Zika virus exposure but not developing symptoms should wait at least **8 weeks** after exposure before attempting pregnancy.
 - There are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding to date.
- Preventing transmission through **sexual contact**:
 - Zika virus remains in semen longer than in blood and can be spread by an infected man to his sex partners (male and female.)
 - Men with exposure to Zika virus should avoid unprotected sex and correctly use condoms during sex (i.e., vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, or fellatio):
 - Men who develop symptoms should use condoms for at least **6 months** after symptoms resolve.
 - Men who do not develop symptoms should use condoms for at least **8 weeks** after possible exposure.
- Preventing transmission through **blood transfusion**:
 - Zika virus could be transmitted from viremic blood donations by exposed persons.
 - Persons with Zika virus exposure who do not develop symptoms should self-defer from blood donations for **4 weeks** after possible exposure.

- Persons with Zika virus exposure who develop symptoms should self-defer from blood donations for **6 months**.

Zika Virus Case Identification and Diagnosis

- Familiarize yourself and your staff with signs and symptoms of Zika virus infection.
 - Recent U.S.-diagnosed patients with travel-associated infections most frequently reported rash (98%), fever (82%), and arthralgia (66%). Headache, muscle pain, and conjunctivitis were also reported, but less frequently.
- Take a thorough travel history.
 - For current information regarding Zika-affected locations see: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/active-countries.html>
- Consider other possible Zika virus exposures (e.g., vertical, sexual, transfusion, etc.).
- Test patients with possible exposure.
 - Asymptomatic pregnant women can be tested within 2-12 weeks of possible exposure.
 - Non-pregnant patients should only be tested if they have a clinically compatible illness.
- One commercial test for Zika virus is now available, but it has some limitations.
 - A Quest Diagnostics test has been granted emergency use authorization by FDA.
 - This is an **RT-PCR** test and is only able to detect Zika virus RNA in symptomatic persons with very recent onset of illness (5 days or less)
- All other Zika virus specimens must be submitted through the Pennsylvania Department of Health.
 - **A one-page specimen submission form has been developed for Zika specimens: click [here](#)**
- Dengue and chikungunya virus infection causes similar symptoms to Zika virus infection and these viruses occur in many countries experiencing Zika virus transmission.
 - Commercial testing options are available for dengue and chikungunya virus infection.
- Patients suspected of having Zika virus infection with no travel outside Pennsylvania in the two weeks prior to illness onset should be reported **immediately** to the local health jurisdiction.

Reporting Arboviral Infections to Public Health

- All arbovirus infections (e.g., infections due to West Nile, dengue, chikungunya, Zika, etc.) are reportable within 24 hours in Pennsylvania.
- Any clusters of rash illness with unknown etiology occurring in households, neighborhoods, or work sites where a confirmed or suspected Zika virus infection is known should be reported immediately to the local health jurisdiction.
- **Any questions or concerns regarding these recommendations should be directed to the PADOH by calling 1-877-PA-HEALTH or contacting your local health department.**

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

This information is current as of May 5, 2016, but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.