

# ZIKA 101: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



With its possible link to birth defects, the World Health Organization has labeled the Zika virus a global health emergency. Here is what you should know:

## WHAT IS THE ZIKA VIRUS?

Zika is an emerging mosquito-borne virus that usually causes a mild illness or no symptoms at all, but the virus can sometimes have serious complications, especially to developing fetuses.

## HOW DO YOU GET IT?

The main way the Zika virus is spread is through the bite of certain *Aedes* species mosquitoes. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite a human who has the virus, and they are then capable of spreading the virus to other susceptible humans. It's recently been shown that the virus can be spread from human to human through infected bodily fluids, but that mode of transmission remains rare.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?



fever



joint pain



skin rash



red eyes

Some patients report muscle pain, general malaise, headache and vomiting. Symptoms typically last between two and seven days. Complications are rare, but some cases require hospitalization for supportive care.

**75-80%** of those infected show **no symptoms at all**



people infected will **experience symptoms**

**FOR MORE INFO  
ONLINE:**

[vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360](http://vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/zika360)

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## WHO'S AT RISK

Everyone who hasn't had the virus is potentially at risk.

### Pregnant Women

- For pregnant women, contracting the virus represents a risk to her unborn baby. Zika appears to be associated with miscarriage and microcephaly, a birth defect in which the infant has an unusually small head and abnormal brain development.

### Anyone

- For everyone else, the biggest potential complication is Guillain-Barré syndrome, in which the immune system attacks the body's own nerve cells, causing paralysis.

## IS THERE A TREATMENT?

No, other than making the patient more comfortable with symptomatic treatment, there is no specific cure or treatment for Zika.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

With no vaccine, the best way to prevent Zika is to avoid mosquito bites.

- Eliminate standing water and other mosquito breeding sites
- Wear protective clothing
- Use insect repellent containing either 25% DEET or 20% Picaridin
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens
- Men who might be infected should also use condoms to avoid infecting their sexual partners