

Zika Fast Facts

- February 1, 2016–November 18, 2019: Per the World Health Organization (WHO), ZIKV was a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” after several cases of microcephaly and rare disorders of the nervous system occurred in Brazil.
- In February 2016, Trinidad and Tobago recorded its first case of ZIKV infection.
- The most significant, long-term public health impact of ZIKV is congenital Zika syndrome in children.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

- **W.H.O. Fact Sheet: Zika Virus (July 2018)**
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zika-virus>
- **CARPHA: Caribbean Public Health Agency**
<http://www.carpha.org/zika>
- **Ministry of Health Trinidad and Tobago:**
Zika Virus - Public Health Advisories & Brochure (Zika Frequently Asked Questions)
<http://www.health.gov.tt/search/default.aspx?srch=zika>

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- **Health Centre in your area**
- **Ministry of Health Website:** <http://www.health.gov.tt/>
Tel : 1-868-627-0010
- **North Central Regional Health Authority:**
Customer Service Hotline at 1-868-715-9785



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What Is Zika Virus?



Photo Credit: Daily News Los Angeles

WHAT IS ZIKA VIRUS?

Zika virus (ZIKV) is spread primarily by the bite of an infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which bites mainly in daytime. *Aedes aegypti* mosquitos spread other diseases, like dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever. ZIKV can also be transmitted from an infected pregnant woman to her baby and by sexual activity with an infected person.

Symptoms

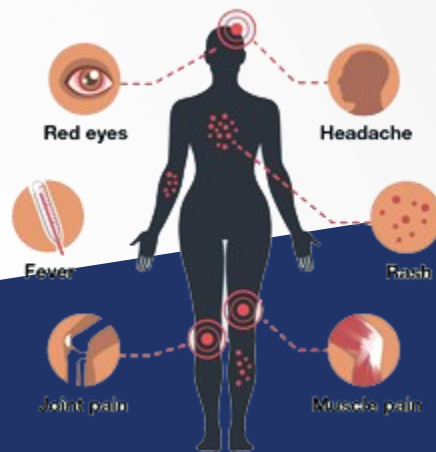


Photo Credit: Semantics Scholar

Most persons with ZIKV infection show no symptoms. If symptoms appear, they are often mild:

- Rash and itching all over the body
- Fever
- Headache
- Joint pain
- Muscle pain
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)

Symptoms last about 2–7 days. Symptoms of ZIKV are similar to other viruses spread through mosquito bites, like dengue and chikungunya. In rare cases, ZIKV can lead to Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can cause muscle weakness and paralysis

Diagnosis

A blood sample can test for ZIKV (if less than 14 days since symptoms began) and for antibodies against ZIKV. A second blood test taken 2 weeks later may be needed to confirm a recent infection.

Treatment

- There is no specific treatment for ZIKV infection. Rest, over-the-counter fever and pain medicine (e.g., paracetamol), and oral fluids can help with symptom relief.

- Rapid and complete recovery occurs in most cases.
- A person infected once with ZIKV will not get it again; immunity to ZIKV appears to be lifelong.
- People infected with ZIKV, chikungunya, or dengue should always be protected from mosquito exposure during illness to prevent other mosquitos from becoming infected and reduce risk of local transmission.

ZIKV Infection and Pregnancy

- Symptoms are usually very mild, or there may be no symptoms.
- Miscarriage, stillbirth, or premature (preterm) births may occur.

ZIKV Infection and Babies

- Most babies are born healthy, even if the mother had ZIKV infection in pregnancy.
- In some babies, growth and/or development may be severely affected.
- Babies may appear to have typical growth and development at birth but then show decreased head growth, delayed development, or other signs in the first 2 years of life.

Prevention

No vaccine exists at this time to protect against infection with ZIKV. Preventing contact with mosquitos will reduce the chances of getting ZIKV infection and other mosquito-borne diseases. Here are some ways to protect you and your family:

- Protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- Correctly and consistently use insect repellent according to product labels.
- Wear long sleeves and clothes that cover the legs.
- Use a mosquito net over the bed for daytime sleeping.
- Install insect screens over all windows/doors, and repair holes so mosquitos remain outside. Use air conditioning where available.
- Get rid of standing water and other mosquito breeding sites. More advice on mosquito control is available from Trinidad and Tobago's Insect Vector Control Division.
- Use condoms to avoid contracting ZIKV through sexual intercourse.
- Family planning can help you avoid an unplanned pregnancy affected by ZIKV infection.