



ZIKA VIRUS FACT SHEET

Zika virus infection is a global public health threat, and has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the WHO. This fact sheet contains information about Zika virus that may be relevant to medical faculty and trainees at the University of Toronto, and is based on the state of knowledge as of February 3, 2016. More detailed information and updates can be accessed through the websites cited in the reference section below.

Epidemiology:

- Zika virus is a flavivirus, transmitted by the Aedes mosquito, the same mosquito that transmits dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever.
- Transmission of Zika virus to humans has been reported from Central and South America, Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and Cape Verde.
- The incubation period is approximately 3-12 days.
- During the first week of infection an infected patient can be a source of infection to others through a mosquito vector.
- Zika virus can be transmitted sexually by an infected individual.
- To date six cases of Zika infection have been reported in Canada (not yet in Ontario) in travelers returning from endemic areas.

Symptoms:

- About 20% of patients infected with Zika virus become ill.
- Symptoms are usually mild and last for 2-7 days.
- The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis, muscle pain and headache.
- Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon, and death is rare.

Travel Notices:

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) travel notices are available at:
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/notices-avis/notices-avis-eng.php?id=143>
 - Pregnant women and those considering becoming pregnant should discuss their travel plans with their health care provider to assess their risk.
 - Consider postponing travel to areas where Zika is circulating.
 - If travel cannot be postponed strict mosquito bite prevention measures should be followed to protect themselves against bites.
<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/insect-bite>
- The US Centers for Disease Control has issued a Level 2 Alert to Central and South America, Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and Cape Verde, meaning that enhanced precautions should be followed and certain high-risk populations (e.g. in this case pregnant women) may wish to delay travel to these destinations.

Prevention:

- Aedes mosquitoes bite both indoors and outdoors, usually during the morning and late afternoon/evening hours; therefore ensure protection throughout the entire day.
- Recommendations available at: <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/insect-bite>
- Infected patients should avoid mosquito bites during the first week of illness.
- Eliminate areas of stagnant water.
- The Canadian Blood Services has announced that people who have travelled outside of Canada, the continental United States and Europe will be ineligible to give blood for 21 days after their return.

When to consider Zika virus infection:

- Patients with acute onset of fever, maculopapular rash, arthralgia or conjunctivitis, who traveled to areas with ongoing transmission in the two weeks prior to illness onset.
- Patients with Guillain-Barré, encephalitis and other neurological or autoimmune disorders.
- Infants with microcephaly and fetal losses in women infected during pregnancy.

Guidelines for diagnosis of Zika virus infection are available at:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Zika-Virus.aspx>

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/IDLandingPages/Zika-Virus-Infection.aspx>

Public Health Agency of Canada:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/notices-avis/index-eng.php>

World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/en/>

[US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

Pan American Health Organization:

http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11585&Itemid=41688&lang=en