



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH updates advisory regarding Zika virus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health is advising pregnant women to postpone travel to areas where the Zika virus is being transmitted.

“All persons who are planning travel to or recently returning from locations with known transmission of Zika virus should take steps to protect themselves and others,” State Epidemiologist Dr. Mary McIntyre said.

Zika virus is being transmitted primarily through the bites of Aedes species mosquitoes. The mosquitoes are the same species that transmit dengue and chikungunya viruses which have also been associated with travel-related illness over the past few years. There have been recent reports that Zika virus is spread through blood transfusion and sexual contact. Rarely, the virus may spread from mother to child around the time of birth. It also may be possible to spread the virus from a mother to her baby during pregnancy.

The specific recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today include the following:

- Pregnant women should not travel to Zika-affected areas
- Men who have traveled to Zika-affected areas and have pregnant partners should abstain from sex or consistently and correctly use condoms for the duration of the pregnancy for all forms of sexual activity.
- Men who have traveled to Zika-affected areas and have non-pregnant partners should consider abstaining from sexual activity or consistently and correctly use condoms.

Infection with the Zika virus causes only mild symptoms in the majority of the cases, but an apparent link to birth defects and other pregnancy-related poor outcomes has been associated with infection during pregnancy.

ADPH will update guidance as additional recommendations are developed. Information on Zika can be found by searching Zika at adph.org.

Since the outbreak is ongoing, the public is asked to check for updated travel notices at the CDC website, cdc.gov, search Zika.

“We expect information to be updated regularly as we learn more,” Dr. McIntyre added. “Any persons concerned that they have been infected should contact their health care provider for evaluation. In addition, asymptomatic pregnant women who have traveled to Zika-affected areas should be tested for the Zika virus between 2-12 weeks post travel.”

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