



# Zika virus and pregnancy

Helpful information for you—  
and your baby

# The Zika virus and you

Chances are, you've heard about Zika virus in the news lately. You may have also heard that it can cause health problems for pregnant women and their babies. **This brochure will give you some important facts**, including ways you can help protect yourself and your unborn child from exposure.

## What is Zika virus?

Zika is a virus that is **spread by mosquitoes**. It can also be spread from infected people in several ways:

- From partners during unprotected sex
- From pregnant women to their babies during pregnancy
- From a blood transfusion

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of Zika virus are often mild, and many people don't even have any. The most common ones are:



Fever



Red, irritated eyes



Joint and muscle pain



Headache



Rash

Even if you don't feel sick, **see your OB/GYN if you have traveled to an area with Zika virus.**

## Why is Zika virus such a big concern?

Zika virus can **cause a birth defect called microcephaly**. This can result in poor brain development and small head size in babies. What this means for the baby depends on how severe the condition is. Not all mothers infected with Zika virus have babies with microcephaly, and experts do not know how often it does happen.

Zika virus can also cause Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) in people who are infected. GBS causes muscle weakness and pain, although most people recover from GBS.

There is currently no vaccine or special medicine for Zika virus. But experts are working hard to keep it from spreading. If you are pregnant or are hoping to get pregnant, **it's important to take steps to protect yourself**.

## What you can do to help protect yourself

- Avoid travel to areas with Zika virus
- If you can't avoid travel to areas with Zika virus:
  - Wear long sleeves and pants to prevent bites
  - Use window and door screens and/or air conditioning
  - Use bug spray
  - Avoid and/or drain standing water
- If your partner has been to an area with Zika virus and you are pregnant, you should **avoid having vaginal, anal, or oral sex** for the duration of your pregnancy or **talk to your OB/GYN** about how to avoid getting Zika virus during sex



# What to do if you have been exposed

Let your OB/GYN know right away if you or your partner have been to an area with Zika virus. Your OB/GYN may recommend that you be tested.

## Working to help you

There are many groups working to help stop Zika virus. For more information and the latest updates, visit:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
**[www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy)**
- The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists: **[www.acog.org/About-ACOG/ACOG-Departments/Zika-Virus/For-Patients](http://www.acog.org/About-ACOG/ACOG-Departments/Zika-Virus/For-Patients)**

---

**Have more questions or concerns about  
how Zika virus can affect you and your baby?  
Talk to your OB/GYN or healthcare  
provider today.**

---