

Zika primer: Pediatricians can help prevent, detect virus in infants

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As temperatures rise, so too does the possibility of encountering mosquitoes carrying Zika virus.

No matter where in the country pediatricians practice, they may come across an infected infant whose mother contracted the virus in the U.S. or while traveling abroad. Some Zika-related birth defects may be apparent immediately, but they also may develop months later.

To get pediatricians up to speed, *AAP News* has created a Zika primer based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data and advice.

Transmission

- Zika virus is transmitted via mosquito bites (most common), sex with an infected partner, blood transfusion or from a pregnant woman to her fetus.
- More than 60 countries and territories have reported mosquitoes carrying the virus.
- Two U.S. states (Florida and Texas) have reported transmission from local mosquitoes.

Symptoms

- Fever, rash, headache, joint pain, conjunctivitis, muscle pain
- Many people will not experience symptoms.
- Infants born to asymptomatic women with Zika infection still can develop birth defects.

Impact on pregnant women and babies in 2016

- 972 completed pregnancies with possible recent Zika virus infection
- 44 states with pregnant women who had possible Zika infection
- 5% of women with possible Zika infection and 10% of mothers with confirmed Zika infection had a baby with birth defects
- 84% of infants with Zika-associated birth defects had brain abnormalities and/or microcephaly

Steps for pediatricians

- Educate pregnant women about Zika, including [travel restrictions](#), protection from [mosquito bites](#) and [sexual transmission](#).
- Ask parents about their recent travel history.
- Use the CDC algorithm at <http://bit.ly/2qTErDf> to evaluate suspected cases. Initial evaluation should include comprehensive physical exam, head ultrasound, standard hearing assessment and Zika virus testing.
- Coordinate with specialists to evaluate and manage birth defects.
- Report suspected congenital Zika virus cases to the local health department and provide information to the [CDC's Zika Pregnancy Registry](#).

- Stay on top of emerging information at www.cdc.gov/zika.

Resources

- [AAP resources including new videos for pediatricians and families](#)
- [CDC Zika guidance for health care providers](#)
- [CDC webinar on Zika](#)
- [Information for parents](#)

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