



Health and
Human Services

State Health Officials Encourage Ongoing Awareness of Travel Recommendations

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RALEIGH, N.C. – State officials continue to encourage awareness of travel recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as they pertain to Zika virus. There are five travel-related cases of Zika virus confirmed in North Carolina, and North Carolinians are encouraged to stay informed of the risk of Zika virus infection before traveling to Central America, South America, Mexico or the Caribbean.

“We have anticipated all along that travel-related cases would be identified in North Carolina, and while travel-related cases are not a probable threat to public health, we always actively monitor emerging global situations and adjust resources to meet needs,” said State Health Director, Randall Williams, MD. “Travelers to any of the countries with active Zika transmission should follow precautions to minimize their exposure to mosquito bites. Pregnant women are particularly urged to take note of the recent CDC travel recommendations advising that travel to areas with active virus transmission be postponed if possible.”

Zika virus is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infectious mosquito. Symptoms include rash and red eyes. Less common symptoms include fever, joint pains and muscle aches. Only about one in five people infected with Zika virus will show symptoms. Sexual transmission of Zika virus is possible, and is of particular concern during pregnancy.

A pregnant woman infected with Zika virus can pass the virus to her unborn baby. A serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly, and other adverse pregnancy outcomes have been reported in some mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant.



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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a travel advisory recommending pregnant women consider postponing travel to any area with active Zika virus transmission. Women who are trying to become pregnant should talk to their doctors about the risk of Zika virus infection before traveling.

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services is currently hiring two medical entomologists, who will oversee surveillance and monitoring of vectors, such as mosquitoes, in North Carolina and consult with local programs on best practices of vector control.

While the primary mosquitoes that carry Zika virus are not believed to be widespread in North Carolina, individuals are always encouraged, as a routine precaution, to take steps to prevent mosquito bites, such as:

- Wearing insect repellent registered with the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Using air conditioning or making sure window and door screens are in place.

For more information about Zika virus, please visit:

<http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/zika.html> or www.cdc.gov/zika.
