

ZIKA VIRUS

What Emergency Nurses Need to Know

What is Zika?

A mosquito-borne viral disease that is transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitos, which are also responsible for the spread of dengue and chikungunya viruses. Zika virus can be transmitted perinatally, in utero, and possibly through transfusions and sexual intercourse.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Fever



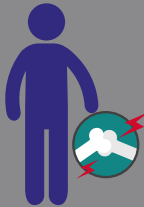
Conjunctivitis



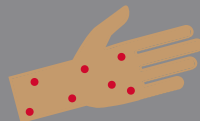
Headache



Joint pain



Maculopapular rash



How is it treated?

- There is no specific antiviral treatment available
- Treatment is generally supportive. Recommendations include:

Rest

Analgesics and antipyretics

Fluids

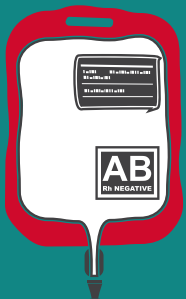
- To reduce the risk of hemorrhage, avoid aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) until dengue virus can be ruled out as the infectious agent

The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting several days to a week. Severe disease is uncommon. There is currently no vaccine available, but Zika is preventable.



Can Zika be transmitted to me by an infected patient?

- Zika virus is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito
- It is unlikely that you will contract the Zika virus while caring for an infected patient
- There have been reports of transmissibility through infected blood and sexual transmission. Therefore, to reduce the risk of transmission:
 - Use standard precautions to reduce the risk of blood and bodily fluid exposures



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- Follow your institution's infection control policies for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)



What should I tell my patients?

- Always give your patients the most up-to-date information from reputable sources
- If your patient has recently returned from a Zika-affected country, instruct him or her to watch for signs and symptoms of Zika for two (2) weeks and seek medical care if symptoms appear
- Educate patients infected with Zika to protect themselves from further mosquito exposure, especially during the first few days of illness to prevent other mosquitoes from becoming infected. This helps reduce the risk of local transmission.

- Instruct your patients to take precautions to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes
- Inform pregnant patients to follow the CDC travel advisory and consider postponing travel to Zika-affected countries



Triage Tips:

- Identify exposure history and at-risk patients
- Has the patient recently traveled to or lived in an area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing?



Visit [CDC Zika Geographic Distribution](#) online for updates.

- Identify Zika signs and symptoms
- Isolate patient and determine necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Inform hospital infection control and other staff at risk of exposure



Fast Facts:

- Zika virus was first identified in Uganda in 1947
- Zika virus is transmitted by the same type of mosquito that carries dengue, yellow fever, and chikungunya
- Mosquitoes that spread Zika virus bite mostly during the daytime
- Onset of symptoms occur

2 to **7** days after being bitten

- 1 in 5 people with Zika virus will become symptomatic



- There may be a link between the Zika virus and a birth defect, microcephaly

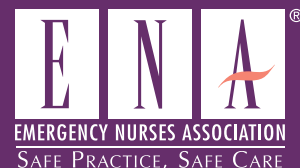


For more information:

www.ena.org

www.cdc.gov/zika/

www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/



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