



AVIATION MEDICAL BULLETIN™

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SPECIAL ISSUE: Zika Virus (Zika)

I suspect by now that almost everyone has heard about the Zika Virus (Zika) and the problems it causes. It is quite difficult (almost impossible) to write an article about Zika because knowledge and understanding of the virus and its complications are rapidly evolving, so much of the information you will see in an article is already obsolete. However, there are a few facts that will not change with time:

1. Zika disease is usually mild and requires no specific treatment. Symptoms are fever, joint pain, headache, and redness of the eyes.
2. The disease is primarily transmitted by mosquitos that have bitten someone with the Zika infection. However, it has now been determined that the disease can be transmitted sexually.
3. The biggest risk is for women who are pregnant or considering becoming pregnant because the disease can also be transmitted to a fetus, and cases of birth defects have been reported.
4. The best way to prevent the disease is to avoid mosquito bites in areas where the disease is endemic. If you are pregnant or considering pregnancy consult your doctor, avoid travel to endemic areas, and take precautions to prevent sexual transmission.

Evolving facts:

1. Zika cases have been reported around the globe. Presently, Florida (specifically Miami-Dade County) is the only state where Zika has been found to be endemic.
2. There is no vaccine.

As I said at the outset, it has been difficult to write this article. If you are interested in learning more about the virus and its complications, there are pages and pages of information that you can find by simply entering Zika in any internet browser. You can also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization web sites where they post monthly updates.

I hope this article has been helpful. I encourage you to contact the Harvey Watt aeromedical staff if you would like more information about Zika or any other health issue.