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## **CDC Issues Updated Zika Virus Recommendations**

### *Timing of Pregnancy after Zika Exposure and Prevention of Sexual Transmission*

COLUMBUS – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued new guidance and information to prevent Zika virus transmission for pregnant women and to prevent sexual transmission. Ohio currently has nine confirmed cases of Zika virus in returning travelers from Zika-affected countries. CDC is reporting 273 travel-associated Zika virus cases in 36 states and the District of Columbia, led by Florida with 70 cases.

The updated guidance for pregnant women is based on evidence that supports a link between Zika and microcephaly, a birth defect that is a sign of incomplete brain development, and can cause other problems such as miscarriage and stillbirth. The updated CDC recommendations are:

- For women who have been diagnosed with Zika virus or who have symptoms of Zika including fever, rash, joint pain or red eyes, to wait at least eight weeks after their symptoms appeared to get pregnant.
- For men who have been diagnosed with Zika virus or who have symptoms to wait at least six months to have unprotected sex.
- For men and women without symptoms of Zika virus to wait at least eight weeks after their possible exposure before trying to get pregnant in order to minimize risk.

The updated guidance on sexual transmission includes new timeframes for men and their non-pregnant partners based on the couple's situation and if the man has traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission. The updated CDC recommendations are:

- Couples with men who have symptoms or confirmed Zika should consider using condoms or not having sex for at least six months after symptoms begin.
- Couples with men who traveled to an area with Zika but did not develop symptoms should consider using condoms or not having sex for at least eight weeks after their return.
- Couples who are trying to get pregnant should consult with their healthcare provider.

“No vaccine exists to prevent Zika virus disease, so it is important to follow CDC guidance,” said Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Medical Director Dr. Mary DiOrio. “We still recommend that pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas with Zika virus transmission. All travelers to Zika-affected countries should take precautions to prevent mosquito bites, which is the primary way you can contract the Zika virus.”

The ODH Laboratory is doing Zika virus surveillance testing to identify suspected Zika virus infection in individuals within seven days of symptom onset. ODH expects to share initial test results within 48 hours of receiving the blood specimen with submitters, such as doctors' offices, hospitals or local health departments.

Go to the ODH website at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/zika> for more information about Zika virus and links to CDC resources including travel advisories for countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.

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