



News Release

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CDC Encourages Following Guidance to Prevent Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus

COLUMBUS --- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC) announced on Tuesday that it is investigating 14 new reports of possible sexual transmission of Zika virus in the U.S., including several involving pregnant women. Due to the possible association between Zika virus infections in pregnant women and certain birth defects, CDC encourages following the interim guidance it issued on Feb. 5 to prevent sexual transmission of Zika virus.

In all events for which information is available regarding the new reports, travelers were men who had recently traveled to an area with local Zika virus transmission and reported symptom onset was within two weeks before the non-traveling female partner's symptoms began. Like previously reported cases of sexual transmission, these cases involve possible transmission of the virus from men to their sex partners. At this time, there is no evidence that women can transmit Zika virus to their sex partners. However, more research is needed to understand this issue.

"Because these new reports suggest that the sexual transmission of Zika virus may be more likely than previously considered, it's even more important that travelers to Zika virus-affected countries take precautions," said ODH Medical Director Dr. Mary DiOrio.

CDC's recommendations for pregnant women and men with pregnant sex partners who live in or have traveled to Zika-affected areas:

- Men with a pregnant sex partner who reside in or have traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission and their pregnant sex partners should use condoms every time during sex or abstain from sexual activity for the duration of the pregnancy.
- Pregnant women and their male sex partners should discuss the male partner's potential exposures and history of Zika-like illness with the pregnant woman's health care provider. Providers should consult CDC's guidelines for evaluation and testing of pregnant women.

CDC's recommendations for non-pregnant women, and men with non-pregnant sex partners who live in or have traveled to Zika-affected areas:

- Couples in which a man resides in or has traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission who are concerned about sexual transmission of Zika virus may consider using condoms or abstaining from sexual activity. It is unknown on how long the risk should be avoided. Research is now underway to answer this question as soon as possible.

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Although sexual transmission of Zika virus is possible, there is no indication that it can spread from person to person through casual contact. Mosquito bites remain the primary way that Zika virus is transmitted. Because there currently is no vaccine or treatment for Zika virus, the best way to avoid Zika virus infection is to prevent mosquito bites.

Of people infected with the Zika virus, 80 percent do not have any symptoms. When symptoms occur, they are often mild, lasting from several days to a week, and include fever, rash, joint and muscle pain, conjunctivitis (red eyes), and headache. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

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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