



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES & PUBLIC PROTECTION

Important Information for All First Responders:

The risk of coming in contact with persons infected with the Zika virus in Connecticut is minimal at this time. However, due to its recent appearance in heavily populated areas and its association with birth abnormalities, the World Health Organization recently designated the Zika virus as a global public health emergency. The purpose of this document is to provide facts about the virus including the degree to which it may be transmitted, and guidance for First Responders who may come in contact with an individual suspected of carrying the virus.

Zika Virus Facts:

- ✓ Zika is a virus that is spread primarily by mosquitos. The type of mosquito that carries the virus, the Aedes mosquito, is not present in Connecticut however; if it was to appear, the optimal response is the same as the mitigation for any mosquito population: Bug repellent, long-sleeved clothing, screened windows and doors, avoiding or eliminating standing water on your property, and other common sense mosquito-control strategies.
- ✓ Zika is not normally transmitted from person to person, but in rare cases may be spread via contact with blood, sexual contact, and from mother to child in the womb.
- ✓ While there is an association between Zika-infected mothers and birth defects, there is no definitive causal link. Even though there is no established link, the Center for Disease Control cautions pregnant women against traveling to Zika-affected areas. Several airlines will reschedule reservations at no cost to qualified passengers.
- ✓ Four out of five people who have the virus will never develop symptoms.
- ✓ When there are symptoms, they can include fever, rash, joint or muscle pain, conjunctivitis ('pink eyes') and headache.
- ✓ There is no specific treatment for Zika virus however; bed rest, hydration, and fever and pain management are recommended. The illness usually goes away in a few days.
- ✓ Ordinarily, people infected with Zika virus do not require hospitalization, and deaths are rare.

How to Treat Suspected or Infected Individuals:

There have been no reported cases of Zika virus in Connecticut. Should the virus appear in Connecticut, or individuals suspect they could possibly be infected; it is prudent to inquire about recent travel to endemic areas, and to notify a health care practitioner immediately.

While interacting with any suspected or Zika-infected individual, follow standard infectious disease procedures: Avoid contact with blood or other bodily fluids, and use basic infection control procedures including vigorous handwashing and wearing and then prescribed disposal of protective gloves and clothing.

First responders should also strive to stay current in the evolution of this and other viruses as we learn more about the disease. As more information becomes available, practice recommendations may change. For now, it is recommended that First Responders continuously review basic infection control procedures, proper body substance isolation, and disinfection procedures, including ambulance disinfection.

Additional Resources:

- www.ct.gov/dph/zika
- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>