

Preventing Zika Infection When You Travel



If you travel to an area where Zika is active, you are at risk for a Zika infection. For the most current Zika travel infection information, visit the CDC at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-information>.

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika infection, so you'll need to take steps to protect yourself.

How does Zika spread?

The Zika virus spreads through mosquito bites and sexual activity. To prevent infection, you need to protect yourself from mosquitoes, and use protection during any sexual activity. You'll need to do this both during travel and after travel.

Travel and pregnancy

If you are pregnant, you should not travel to an area with Zika. If your partner is pregnant or you are planning a pregnancy, talk with your healthcare provider before traveling. This is because Zika can cause severe birth defects in a baby when a pregnant woman has Zika.

Before you travel

When you are getting ready for your trip:

- **Choose protective clothing.** Bring clothing that covers your body to prevent mosquito bites. Pick clothing with long sleeves and long pant legs. Bring socks and shoes to cover your feet.
- **Buy permethrin.** This is a type of insecticide you can apply to fabrics. If you are going camping, treat your clothing, shoes, and your tent with permethrin. You can also buy gear that's already treated. Don't use permethrin directly on your skin.
- **Pack a mosquito net.** You'll need to use a mosquito net if you are sleeping outdoors or in a place with no screens or air conditioning. If you don't know if you will have access to a net, pack your own. Bring enough nets for all members in your group.
- **Buy EPA-approved insect skin spray.** Bring a skin spray that is EPA-approved and contains DEET, picaridin (also called KBR 3023, Bayrepel, or icaridin), oil of lemon eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or IR3535. Some insect sprays should not be used on children. Make sure to follow the instructions on the label about who should use it, how to apply it, and when to reapply. Don't use products containing OLE or PMD on children under 3 years old. Never put insect repellent on a baby's or a child's hands, eyes, mouth, cuts, or irritated skin..

While you are traveling

When you are in an area with Zika:

- **Look for air conditioning or screens.** When picking a restaurant, hotel, or other venue, choose places with screens in windows and doors, or air conditioning.
- **Wear your protective clothes.** When you go outside, wear clothes that covers your body to prevent mosquito bites. Choose long sleeves and long pant legs. Wear socks and shoes to cover your feet and ankles.
- **Use insect spray often.** For skin that's not covered with clothes, apply your insect spray as the label directs to prevent mosquito bites. Do this both during the day and at night.

- **Sleep with a mosquito net.** Make sure to use a mosquito net if you are sleeping outdoors or in a venue with no screens or air conditioning.
- **Use protection if you have sex.** Zika can be spread during vaginal, oral, and anal sex, and shared sex toys. Use condoms and dental dams during your travel.

When you get home

After you return from your trip, make sure to:

- Prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks. This is to avoid infecting mosquitoes that can then carry Zika from you to others.
- Use condoms or don't have sex for at least 6 months after your symptoms start if you are a man, or 8 weeks if you are a woman.
- If your partner is pregnant, use protection every time you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex. Or don't have sex during the pregnancy.
- If you are a female, don't try for a pregnancy until at least 8 weeks after your Zika symptoms start.
- If you are a male, don't try for a pregnancy until at least 6 months after your Zika symptoms start.
- If only the male partner traveled to the Zika area, the couple should use condoms or not have sex for at least 3 months, even if the male partner has no symptoms.

Contact your healthcare provider right away if you have symptoms of Zika after travel. Symptoms may occur within a week or two of travel. They may be mild and can include fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes, muscle aches, and headache. You may need a blood or urine test to check for the virus.

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