

Zika Virus

Flaviviridae

Zika is a risk group 2 virus. It is considered a **reproductive pathogen** due to the increased risk of preterm birth, fetal death, still birth, and congenital Zika syndrome characterized by microcephaly, abnormal brain development, and other complications. While infection in the first trimester is generally associated with higher risk of serious defects, infection at any time during pregnancy can lead to congenital abnormalities.

How can I be exposed to Zika?

- Exposure occurs via mosquitoes, particularly *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*.
- Laboratory personnel are at risk of exposure from needlesticks and other parenteral inoculations. Aerosols in the laboratory pose a significant risk of infection.
- There is a high risk of vertical transmission of Zika virus from mother to fetus via the placenta or at the time of delivery.

How can I protect myself from exposure?

- Avoid direct skin contact by wearing protective clothing and gloves.
- Avoid mucous membrane exposure by using eye/face protection for procedures that may produce splashes.
- Avoid respiratory exposure by using a biosafety cabinet or other primary containment device and wearing a respirator for procedures that may produce aerosols.
- The use of needles, syringes, and other sharp objects should be strictly limited, and additional precautions should be taken when working with animals.

What should I do if I think I've been exposed to Zika?

Wash the affected area immediately for 15 minutes with soap and water and seek medical attention.

What symptoms should I look for after a potential exposure?

Symptoms include rash, fever, fatigue, headache, conjunctivitis, joint stiffness, muscle pain.

How long does it take for symptoms to develop?

Symptoms typically appear 3 to 14 days after exposure.

Is there a treatment or vaccine?

No, there are no vaccines for Zika. Treatment is supportive care only.

Can I transmit Zika to other people?

Yes, mother to fetus transmission during all trimesters of pregnancy and sexual transmission has been documented.

Can I transmit it to my pets?

There have been no documented reports of human to animal transmission of Zika Virus.

Can it survive on surfaces?

Zika virus can remain viable on surfaces for up to 84 hours after drying. It can be inactivated by exposure to UV radiation or elevated temperatures.

See *Pathogen Safety Data Sheet* for More Information

