

Idaho Traveler Tests Positive for Zika Virus Infection

Panhandle Health District news release

A north Idaho woman over the age of 60 who recently traveled to Mexico is confirmed to have been infected with Zika virus, which can cause severe birth defects if infection occurs in pregnant women. This is the first reported case of Zika virus infection in the state, with Idaho becoming the 47th state to report a travel-related Zika virus infection this year. The woman reportedly had symptoms, but did not require hospitalization.

Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that is most commonly spread through the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* or *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, which are not found in Idaho. Because of this, there is no danger to the general public of the virus circulating through casual contact.

Only one in five people exposed to the virus usually develop any symptoms, which are usually mild and last from a few days to a week after infection. The most common symptoms of infection are fever, rash, muscle and joint aches, and pinkeye. Zika is known to cause serious birth defects and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies whose mothers are infected during pregnancy. There is no preventive vaccine for Zika virus.

Zika virus is not spread from person to person through casual contact, but can be spread through sexual contact by both men and women. People who have recently traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission should either use a condom or avoid sex to reduce their [risk](#). If a woman is pregnant, condoms should be used during all sexual contact and for the duration of the pregnancy if their partner recently traveled to an area with local Zika transmission. Women wanting to become pregnant should not try to conceive for at least eight weeks after they or their partner's return from an area where Zika virus is circulating if neither partner had symptoms of Zika virus infection, or 6 months if either had symptoms. Women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant are strongly advised to avoid travel to areas of Zika virus transmission unless it is absolutely necessary.

Aedes mosquitoes are daytime biters that prefer temperate and tropical climates. Travelers are advised to take precautions when visiting areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. This includes a small area of north Miami in Florida, and many countries in Central and South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands.

If you plan to travel to an area where Zika virus is circulating, public health officials recommend you protect yourself from mosquito bites by:

- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Using EPA-registered insect repellents
- Using permethrin-treated clothing and gear
- Staying and sleeping in screened-in or air-conditioned rooms

Since January, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting 1,658 Zika disease cases nationwide. Almost all of those cases are related to travel outside the United States. During the last week, Florida announced 14 cases believed to be contracted from local mosquitoes in a small area of north Miami. Idaho has had no confirmed cases of Zika virus infection reported prior to this case.

Additional information:

- CDC: [Zika virus](#)
- CDC: [Travel Advisories](#)
- CDC: [For pregnant women](#)