



KAREN L. SMITH, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

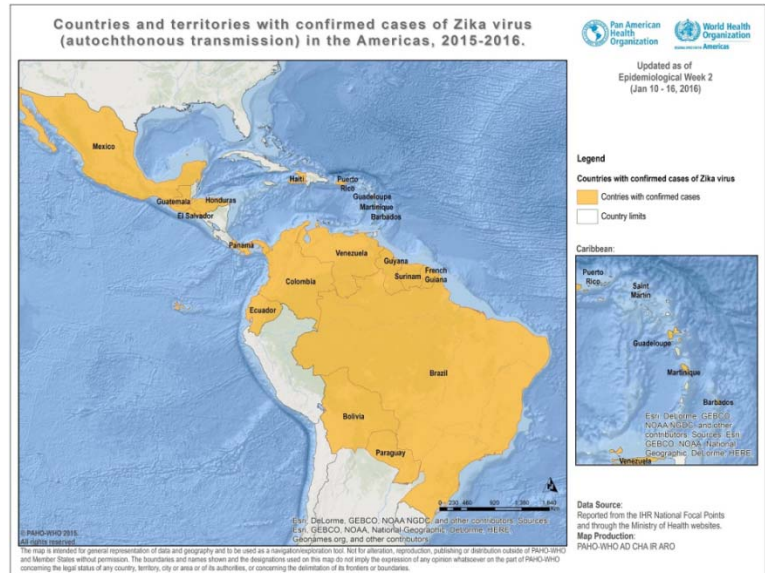
State of California—Health and Human Services Agency California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

HEALTH ADVISORY ZIKA VIRUS IN LATIN AMERICA

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a travel alert ([Level 2-Practice Enhanced Precautions](#)) for people traveling to regions and certain countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing including Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, Venezuela, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The map shown is from the [Pan American Health Organization](#).



The CDC alert follows reports in Brazil of increased numbers of newborns with [microcephaly](#) (a much smaller than expected head size) and fetal losses among mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. However, additional studies are needed to understand potential embryonic and fetal effects of Zika virus.

Until more is known and out of an abundance of caution, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends special travel precautions for pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant:

- Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. Pregnant women who must travel to one of these areas should talk to their healthcare provider first and strictly follow [steps to avoid mosquito bites](#) (see below) during the trip.
- Women trying to become pregnant should consult with their healthcare provider before traveling to these areas and strictly follow [steps to avoid mosquito bites](#) (see below).
- Pregnant women who traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission during pregnancy should be evaluated for Zika virus infection if they had any symptoms suggestive of Zika or if their baby has evidence of microcephaly or brain calcifications. Dengue and chikungunya virus infection should be ruled out in these patients.

Zika Virus Disease

Zika is an infectious disease caused by the Zika virus, which is transmitted to people by *Aedes* mosquitoes. Most infected people have no symptoms. If symptoms develop, the most common are fever, rash, joint pain, and/or red eyes. Symptoms usually begin 3-7



days after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito and last several days to a week. The illness is usually mild, and severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. There is no specific treatment for Zika virus disease. The only treatment option available is the provision of supportive care including rest, fluids, and use of analgesics and antipyretics.

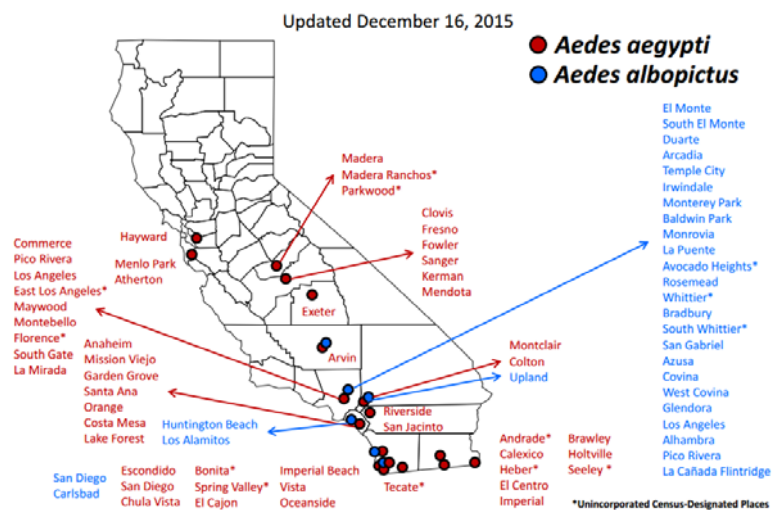
Recommendations for Physicians

- Review the epidemiology and signs and symptoms of Zika.
- Consider Zika in the differential diagnosis of febrile patients with compatible signs, who have traveled to a Zika endemic or outbreak area in the two weeks prior to symptom onset.
- Report suspect cases of Zika virus disease to the local health department, which can assist with coordinating tests needed to help confirm the diagnosis. Zika virus is closely related to dengue and West Nile viruses, and antibody tests for these viruses can be cross-reactive.
- If Zika, chikungunya, or dengue is suspected, request tests through your local health department. Establishing the diagnosis is important because proper clinical management of dengue can improve outcome and follow up is recommended for women who have Zika during pregnancy.
- Advise patients with suspect Zika, chikungunya, or dengue to take measures to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes during the first week of illness.

Mosquito Vectors

Viruses such as Zika, chikungunya, and dengue are transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. These two mosquitoes are aggressive day-biters that can potentially transmit these viruses after biting an infected person. These mosquitoes typically breed and develop in small, water-filled containers. In California, *Aedes aegypti* has been detected in [twelve counties](#). *Aedes albopictus* has been identified in [five counties](#) (see map).

Aedes aegypti and *Aedes albopictus* Mosquitoes Detection Sites in California, 2011-2015



Thus far in California, Zika infections have been documented only in persons who were infected while traveling outside the United States. While the risk for transmission of Zika, chikungunya, or dengue viruses is still low in California, infected travelers coming back to California can transmit these viruses to *Aedes* mosquitoes that bite them. This may lead to additional people becoming infected if they are then bitten by those mosquitoes. To date no local transmission of Zika infections has occurred in California.

Important Information for Travelers

If you are traveling to a region affected by Zika, chikungunya, or dengue, the California Department of Public Health recommends taking appropriate precautions for avoiding

mosquito bites during the day and at night. Pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant should review the recommendations listed earlier.

If you have returned from an affected region and have fever with rash and/or joint pain within the week following your return, please contact your medical provider and say where you have traveled.

Prevention

There are no vaccines to prevent Zika infection. Preventing mosquito bites is the only way to avoid becoming infected.

- Use insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or para-menthane-diol for long lasting protection. If you use both sunscreen and insect repellent, apply the sunscreen first and then the repellent.
- **Using insect repellent is safe and effective. Pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding can and should choose an EPA-registered insect repellent and use it according to the product label.**
- When weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. If you are not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes inside your home or hotel, sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Help reduce the number of mosquitoes outside your home or hotel room by emptying standing water from containers such as flowerpots or buckets.

For More Information

CDC general information about Zika: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

MMWR Early Release (January 19, 2016): Interim guidelines for pregnant women during a Zika virus outbreak — United States, 2016:
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6502e1er.htm>