



Sarah S. Mack, MPH, Director
Cameron Kaiser, M.D., Public Health Officer

July 5, 2016

Contacts:

Jose Arballo Jr., Senior Public Information Specialist
Riverside University Health System-Public Health
Office: 951.358.5599 Cell: 951.712.3705
Email: jarballo@rivcocha.org

Barbara Cole, Director, Disease Control
Riverside University Health System-Public
Office: 951.358.5107 Cell: 951.906.9001
Email: bcole@rivcocha.org

Health officials confirm first Zika case in Riverside County

A 50-year-old man who recently traveled to the Caribbean has tested positive for the Zika virus, making him the first confirmed case in Riverside County.

County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser emphasized the infection was not locally acquired and the patient, who lives in Southwest Riverside County, likely became infected during his travels to the Dominican Republic where the Zika-infected mosquitoes are present. The patient is expected to fully recover.

There have been no locally acquired Zika cases in the continental U.S.

"While Riverside County is one of the last counties in Southern California to have a confirmed case, we always knew it would happen eventually," said Kaiser. "We will continue working together with our partners in health care and vector control to protect our residents, especially pregnant women and the unborn, who are most at risk."

Zika is typically transmitted to people by a bite from an infected mosquito, however, it can also be spread from mother to unborn child, through sexual contact, and through blood transfusions. The mosquito that carries Zika has been found in portions of Riverside County, including Riverside, the Coachella Valley, and parts of the San Jacinto Valley.

About 80 percent of people who are infected with Zika do not have any symptoms. Illness may develop in 20 percent of infected people within three to seven days after a bite from an infected mosquito. Serious complications are extremely rare for the patient, but Zika has been linked to abnormal brain development in the baby when it infects a pregnant woman. Symptoms are generally mild and can last for several days to a week. Common symptoms of Zika include fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis (red eyes), muscle pain or headache. There is no medication to treat Zika and no vaccine is currently available. Anyone who has these symptoms with a history of mosquito bites should see their medical provider.

The best way to prevent Zika is to avoid travel to areas where active transmission is present. Zika is only one of several diseases that can be spread by mosquitoes. To protect yourself from mosquito bites, consider the following:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and shoes.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents and apply according to the label instructions.
- Stay and sleep in places with air conditioning and screened-in windows.
- Prevent standing water in your yard by disposing discarded tires, cans, plastic containers; draining standing water from pool or hot tub covers; turning over plastic wading pools and wheel barrows when not in use; keeping drains, ditches and culverts clean of trash and weeds so water will drain properly; and cleaning gutters to ensure they drain properly.
- If you are returning from a Zika area, which includes the Caribbean, most of Central and South America and some Pacific islands, wear insect repellent both there and also for at least three weeks when you return here to reduce the risk of spreading it locally.