



Kean Student Health Services

Health Advisory - Zika Virus

Kean University Health Services would like to alert our community about the Zika virus as individuals start to consider travel plans for any upcoming breaks. This mosquito-borne virus has been declared a Global Health Emergency by the World Health Organization. Local transmission of the virus has been identified in at least 25 countries in South and Central America, the Caribbean. Anyone traveling to these areas is at risk of infection without proper protection. The southern parts of Florida and Texas have had local cases of Zika in the past; although travel restrictions have been lifted in these areas individuals should continue to be aware of changes in the travel status to these areas and take precautions.

Transmission

The Zika virus is primarily transmitted through the bite of the *Aedes* species mosquito. The virus can also be transmitted from an infected pregnant mother to her unborn child. The virus has been reported to cause serious birth defects. Zika virus can be transmitted through vaginal, oral and anal sex. The virus can be transmitted even if the individual does not have symptoms. Zika virus stays in semen longer than any other body fluid. Male and female condoms and dental dams are recommended for protection for six months if the man traveled to a high risk country and for 8 weeks if the female traveled to a high risk country.

Symptoms

About one in five people infected with the Zika virus will become symptomatic. Characteristic clinical symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Symptoms usually occur within two to seven days of being bitten and in most cases are mild. Guillain-Barre' syndrome has been reported in some patients following the Zika virus but severe symptoms are uncommon.

Protection and Implications

There is no vaccine for the Zika Virus. Pregnant women or those who are planning to become pregnant should avoid all travel to areas where Zika virus is present. If traveling to a high risk area it is advised to use CDC recommended insect repellents and keep skin covered. This will help to protect travelers from not only the Zika virus but also other mosquito-borne infections such as Dengue and Chikungunya. Until more is known about sexual transmission of Zika virus avoid unprotected sexual contact with anyone who has traveled to a high risk area.

For a list of high risk countries go to: www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html.

For more additional information about Zika virus go to: www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html.

For more information about sexual transmission of Zika go to: www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/sexual-transmission-prevention.html#interested

For resources about insect repellents go to: www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you

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