

January 29, 2016

To: All Health Care Practitioners

**Subject: Zika Virus**

Dear colleagues:

Zika virus is a mosquito borne infection that is currently emerging in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Zika virus infections have been confirmed in several infants with microcephaly and in fetal losses in women infected during pregnancy. Investigation to better understand the correlation between Zika virus infection and risks during pregnancy is ongoing.

Public Health routinely recommends seeking consultation for health advice prior to travel. In this situation we specifically recommend that pregnant women and those considering becoming pregnant check in with their health care provider to assess their risk and consider postponing travel to areas where the Zika virus is circulating in the Americas. If travel cannot be postponed, strict mosquito bite prevention measures should be followed due to the possible association between Zika virus infection and increased risk of serious health effects on their unborn baby.

Protect yourself from mosquito bites at all times, as the Zika virus is transmitted by a mosquito that can bite in daylight and evening hours:

- Cover up: light-coloured, long-sleeved, loose fitting, tucked-in shirts, long pants, shoes or boots (not sandals), and a hat.
- Use insect repellent on exposed skin: insect repellents that contain DEET or Icaridin are the most effective, and use as directed by manufacturer.
- Consider your accommodations: stay in a well-screened or completely enclosed air-conditioned room.
- Sleep under a bed net, preferably treated with insecticide.
- Apply a permethrin insecticide to clothing and other travel gear for greater protection.

For more information on symptoms, clinical diagnosis, management and treatment see the Government of Canada Diseases and Conditions Zika virus web pages at:

[http://healthy Canad ians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/index-eng.php](http://healthy Canadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/index-eng.php)

Sincerely,



Dr. Cristin Muecke  
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