Zika virus and pregnancy

If you’re pregnant and think you may have been exposed to Zika, see your health care provider right away and get tested.

If you get Zika during pregnancy, you can pass it to your baby. Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly and other problems, like miscarriage and stillbirth.

Zika spreads in several ways:
• Through mosquito bites. This is the most common way Zika spreads. The mosquitoes that spread it live both inside and outside and bite during the day and at night.
• Through body fluids, like blood and semen
• By passing it to your baby if you’re infected with Zika during pregnancy

How to protect yourself and others from Zika:
• Prevent mosquito bites.
• Don’t have unprotected sex if your partner may have been infected with Zika. If you do have sex, use a condom.
• If you work in a hospital, lab or other health care setting, follow your workplace rules about how to handle infected patients, blood and body fluids.
• If you have or may have Zika, wait at least 4 weeks before donating blood.

Signs and symptoms of Zika include:
• Headache
• Fever (You may or may not have a fever if you have Zika.)
• Joint or muscle pain
• Pink eye or pain behind the eyes
• Rash
• Throwing up

You may have Zika and not know it. If you do get sick, it’s usually mild. Most people with Zika don’t get sick.

How to prevent mosquito bites
✓ Use bug spray or lotion that’s registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (also called EPA). Always follow the instructions on the product label. It’s safe to use products with DEET, picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
✓ Make sure your clothes cover and protect your skin. Treat clothes, shoes and other gear with a bug spray called permethrin. Don’t spray permethrin on your skin. If you’re pregnant or trying to get pregnant and you work outside, ask your boss if you can work inside.
✓ Remove still water from inside and outside your home or work. Empty water from flowerpots, buckets, pet water bowls and children’s pools. Mosquitoes can lay eggs in very small amounts of water.
✓ Stay in places that have air conditioning or screens on doors and windows.
✓ Use mosquito netting and bed nets.

For more information
• marchofdimes.org/zika
• askus@marchofdimes.org
• news momsneed.marchofdimes.org
• twitter.com/modhealthtalk
• cdc.gov/zika
• Your state or local health department