

Jackson County Department of Public Health

Melissa McKnight
Assistant Health Director
828-587-8288

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ZIKA UPDATE

The Zika virus spreads to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito but can also be spread during sex by a person infected with Zika to his or her partners. Many people infected with Zika won't have symptoms but, for those who do, the illness is usually mild with the following symptoms: fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Hospitalization is rare; however, Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly. Until more is known about this disease, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that pregnant women avoid traveling to areas with Zika.

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent Zika. The best way to prevent this disease (and any disease spread by mosquitos) is to:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning and windows and door screening.
- Treat clothing and gear with permethrin or buy pre-treated items.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellents; when used as directed, these repellents are proven safe and effective even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Do not use insect repellents on babies younger than 2 months.
- Prevent sexual transmission of Zika by using condoms or not having sex.

As of August 24, 2016, there have been no locally-acquired cases of Zika in the state of North Carolina. However, Zika virus outbreaks are occurring in multiple countries around the world. Locally-acquired cases of Zika have been reported in three US territories (American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands) and two areas of Miami, Florida (the Wynwood neighborhood and Miami Beach). The CDC offers the following guidance for people who live in or who have traveled to areas in Miami, Florida after July 14th:

- Pregnant women should not travel to these areas.
- Pregnant women and their partners who do travel to these areas should follow steps to prevent mosquito bites.
- Women and men who live in or travel to these areas and who have a pregnant sex partner should use condoms every time they have sex during the pregnancy.

For more guidance, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/intheus/florida-update.html>. For questions, contact the Health Department at 828-586-8994.

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