



ZIKA VIRUS



What is Zika?

Zika virus is a **mosquito-borne virus** that was first identified in Uganda in 1947 in monkeys. In 1952 it was identified in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania in humans. Outbreaks of Zika virus disease have been recorded in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific.

The first large outbreak of disease caused by Zika infection was reported from the Island of Yap (Federated States of Micronesia) in 2007. In July 2015 Brazil reported an association between Zika virus infection and *Guillain-Barré syndrome. In October 2015 Brazil reported an association between Zika virus infection and microcephaly.

What is Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)?

GBS is an uncommon sickness of the nervous system in which a person's own immune system damages the nerve cells, causing muscle weakness, and sometimes, paralysis. Several countries that have experienced Zika outbreaks recently have reported increases in people who have Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). Current research suggests that GBS is strongly associated with Zika; however, **only a small proportion of people with recent Zika virus infection get GBS.** Global Medical Agencies are continuing to investigate the link between GBS and Zika to learn more.

Apart from GBS, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (a disease of the central nervous system) was recently found to be one of the neurologic manifestations which possibly resulted from Zika virus.

What are the symptoms of Zika?

Most Zika virus infection is asymptomatic. Many people infected with Zika virus won't have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms. The symptoms of Zika virus infection include:

- Skin rash
- Fever
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Muscle or joint pain
- General malaise.

Symptoms typically begin 2-7 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. These symptoms are usually mild and last for a few days. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and there are very rarely fatalities. Once a person has been infected with Zika, they are likely to be protected from future infections.



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How is Zika Diagnosed?

Infection with Zika virus may be suspected based on symptoms and recent history of travel (e.g. residence in or travel to an area with active Zika virus transmission). A diagnosis of Zika virus infection can only be confirmed through laboratory tests on blood or other body fluids, such as urine, saliva or semen.

How can Zika affect pregnancy?

The current major concern is the association with adverse pregnancy outcome ([microcephaly](#)) and neurological and autoimmune complications such as Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). Other problems have been detected among fetuses and infants infected with Zika virus before birth, such as defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth.

According to the World Health Organization, based on research to date, there is scientific consensus that Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and GBS.

Is there a cure or specific treatment available?

There is no specific medication for Zika virus infection and the mainstay of treatment is symptomatic relief and prevention of dehydration. If symptoms worsen, seek medical care and advice.

How is Zika Transmitted?

Zika virus is primarily transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito from the *Aedes* genus, mainly *Aedes aegypti* in tropical regions (which is currently not found in Hong Kong). *Aedes* mosquitoes usually bite during the day, peaking during early morning and late afternoon/evening. This is the same mosquito that transmits dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever. Sexual transmission of Zika virus is also possible. Other modes of transmission such as blood transfusion are being investigated.

Prevention

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika. The best way to prevent diseases spread by mosquitoes is to protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites. Here's how:

Clothing:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants; items that cover as much of the body as possible.
- If available, treat your clothing and gear with permethrin or buy pre-treated items.



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Insect repellent

- It is highly recommended to use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered insect repellents](#) with one of the following active ingredients: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol. Always follow the product label instructions.
- When used as directed, these insect repellents are proven safe and effective even for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Do not use insect repellents on babies younger than 2 months old.
- Do not use products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol on children younger than 3 years old.
- Special attention and help should be given to those who may not be able to protect themselves adequately, such as young children, the sick or elderly. Travellers and those living in affected areas should take the basic precautions described above to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

At Home

- Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Take steps to control mosquitoes inside and outside your home.
- Mosquito netting can be used to cover babies younger than 2 months old in carriers, strollers, or cribs.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outdoors.
- It is important to cover, empty or clean potential mosquito breeding sites in and around houses such as buckets, drums, pots, gutters, and used tyres.

What is the HKRU doing?

- The Union is closely monitoring reports of recorded cases and in continuous contact with the Medical Advisory Services.

What should players touring overseas be doing?

- Any returning player experiencing the above symptoms should see their doctor.
- Decisions on travelling and touring are the responsibility of the individual teams.
- HKRU will monitor national advice and make recommendations accordingly.

Where can I find more information on this?

HK CHP (Centre for Health Protection):- http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/43086.html

CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):- <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

The World Health Organization:- <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>