

Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

TRAVEL ADVISORY

Zika

The Zika virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito, the same mosquitoes that spread dengue and chikungunya viruses.

The list of countries where Zika has been reported include American Samoa, Anguilla, Antigua, Argentina, Aruba, Barbados, Barbuda, Belize, Bolivia, Bonaire, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Cape Verde, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico(US territory),Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kosrae (Federated States of Micronesia), Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mexico, New Caledonia, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Saba, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Singapore, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Thailand, The Bahamas, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, U.S Virgin Islands, Venezuela and Vietnam. This list may change as the infection spreads to other countries, and travellers are requested to consult the WHO ,website on www.who.int .

The symptoms of Zika virus disease include mild fever, rash, conjunctivitis and muscle or joint pain. The virus has been found to be associated with severe birth defects such as microcephaly following Zika infection in pregnant women. There is no specific treatment against the virus. Travellers to countries with active Zika transmission are advised to:

- Avoid mosquito bites by covering as much of the body as possible with long, light-coloured clothing and also by using mosquito repellent creams;
- Avoid unnecessary outings at dawn and at dusk; and
- Sleep under a mosquito net and /or in an air-conditioned room as far as possible.

It is not recommended at present that a woman who is pregnant or is trying to become pregnant travel to any of the countries listed above. If travel to these countries cannot be avoided, it is recommended to seek advice from a medical professional and strictly follow the steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip. In the event of fever with one or more of the symptoms of Zika developing during travel, it is recommended to consult a doctor.

There is no vaccine against Zika virus. Protection against mosquito bites and control of mosquito proliferation remain the two main pillars of prevention.

Following return from the countries listed above, it is advisable to contact the nearest health office, health centre or hospital. The following hotline number is also available on weekdays from 09.00 to 16.00 hours: **8924**

20th October 2016