



**Update on Zika Virus**

**TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities**  
**FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP, WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health Commissioner and State Health Officer**  
**DATE: 01-28-2016**

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

This alert is an update on the Zika virus, a reportable arboviral disease. Nineteen states have had imported cases of the disease; West Virginia has no cases to date. Pregnant women should consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing due to possible association between infection and poor pregnancy outcomes (e.g. microcephaly and other birth defects).

The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health would like to bring the following key points to your attention:

- Differential diagnoses for Zika virus infection should be based on travel history and exposures.
- Providers should report suspected cases of Zika virus to the local health department within 24 hours to facilitate diagnosis and testing, and to mitigate the risk of local transmission.
- Testing for the Zika virus must be arranged by the local health department in conjunction with the Office of Laboratory Services (OLS). OLS will coordinate specimen shipment to CDC for testing.
- Dengue, chikungunya, and Zika virus are all transmitted by the same mosquitoes and have similar clinical presentations. It is important to rule out dengue in order to appropriately manage the disease.
- CDC has issued a Level 2 travel alert for people traveling to Zika virus affected countries:  
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/zika-virus-caribbean>.

Zika virus cases are encouraged to avoid mosquito bites during the first week of illness as the risk of transmitting the virus to a mosquito is highest during this time period. Infected mosquitoes can bite other people, resulting in locally-acquired cases of the disease. No locally-acquired cases have been reported in the United States. *Aedes albopictus*, a vector of the Zika virus, is widespread in counties across West Virginia.

Symptoms of the Zika virus are mild and usually begin 2-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms include fever, joint pain, rash, and conjunctivitis, headache, and muscle pain. About 80% of infected persons are asymptomatic. Hospitalization and death are not usually associated with this disease. There is no vaccine or treatment for the Zika virus and cases are advised to get plenty of rest, keep hydrated, and relieve acute pain and fever with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. acetaminophen).

For more information, contact your local health department or the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (DIDE) at 1 (800) 423-1271, ext 1 or 1 (304) 558-5358, ext 1, or visit the DIDE website at [www.dide.wv.gov](http://www.dide.wv.gov).

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance. Warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.