

# LGBT COMMUNITY: HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELVES FROM ZIKA



**Zika virus spreads primarily through mosquito bites. Also, anyone who is sexually active and infected with Zika can pass it to their partners through sex. Sexual orientation or gender identity does not affect whether someone can get or pass Zika through sex. You can protect yourself by preventing mosquito bites and using male or female condoms every time you have sex, or not have sex.**

## Who can pass Zika through sex?

- Zika can pass through sex, even if the infected person does not have symptoms at the time or never has symptoms at all.
- A person with Zika can spread it before their symptoms start, while they have symptoms, and after their symptoms end.

## What type of sex puts a person at risk for getting Zika?

- Zika can spread through vaginal, anal, and oral sex, and the sharing of sex toys.
- Body fluids that can spread Zika include semen, vaginal fluids, and blood.
- Zika can stay in semen longer than in vaginal fluids, urine, and blood. It may be possible that urine or saliva can spread Zika if a person has very high levels of virus in their body, although there are no reported cases of this.



## Who should be worried about getting Zika from sex?

- Anyone who is pregnant or could become pregnant, regardless of gender identity, should know how to protect themselves from Zika because infection during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects. Pregnant people and their partners who live in or traveled to an area with Zika should protect themselves during pregnancy.

## How can people protect against getting Zika from sex?

Anyone with a partner who's been in an area with Zika can use condoms every time they have sex, or not have sex to avoid getting Zika from sex. Not sharing sex toys can also reduce the risk of spreading Zika to sex partners.

- Condoms include male (external or penile) condoms and female (internal or vaginal) condoms.
- Dental dams may also be used for certain types of oral sex.
  - » Male condoms can be used for penetrative sex (vagina, neovagina, or anus), or oral (mouth-to-penis) sex.
  - » Female condoms can be used for penetrative sex (vagina or neovagina) or for anal sex.
  - » Dental dams are latex or polyurethane sheets used between the mouth and neopenis, clitoris, vagina, or anus during oral sex.
- Condoms can also be used on some sex toys.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



**If someone is pregnant and has a partner who lives in or traveled to an area with Zika**

- Use condoms every time you have sex or do not have sex during the entire pregnancy.



**If you or your partner is thinking about pregnancy (including insemination or surrogacy)**

- Talk to your healthcare provider if one or both of you live in or traveled to an area with Zika.

**If you aren't concerned about pregnancy, but you or your partner have traveled to an area with Zika & have concerns about getting Zika**

- Use condoms or do not have sex for
  - » At least 8 weeks after a Zika diagnosis or start of symptoms, if the traveling partner produces vaginal fluids.
  - » At least 6 months after a Zika diagnosis or start of symptoms, if the traveling partner produces semen. This extended period is because Zika stays in semen longer than in other body fluids.
  - » At least 8 weeks after returning, if the traveling partner has no symptoms, regardless of whether they produce semen or vaginal fluids.

**Couples living in an area with Zika** can use condoms or not have sex as long as there is Zika in the area. If either partner develops symptoms of Zika or has concerns, they should talk to a healthcare provider.