



DATE:	August 16, 2018
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Rachel Levine, MD, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Updated Guidance for Preconception Counseling and Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus for Men with Possible Zika Virus Exposure
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	Statewide
COUNTY:	Statewide
MUNICIPALITY:	Statewide
ZIP CODE:	Statewide

This transmission is a “Health Advisory” provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Summary:

- CDC’s last interim guidance released October 2016 recommended that men with possible Zika virus exposure wait **at least 6 months** before trying to conceive with their partner.
- CDC now recommends that men with possible Zika virus exposure who are planning to conceive with their partner wait **at least 3 months** after symptom onset (if symptomatic) or their last possible Zika virus exposure (if asymptomatic) before engaging in unprotected sex.
- https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6731e2.htm?s_cid=mm6731e2_w

Women and men who are considering pregnancy should talk to their doctor or other healthcare provider about their pregnancy plans and possible Zika risk before they travel and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip. All male-female couples should practice abstinence or use barrier methods for at least 3 months after the male partner returns from an area with active Zika transmission, even if the male partner is asymptomatic.

SEXUAL TRANSMISSION

- Zika can be passed through sex from a person who has Zika to his or her sex partners.
 - Zika can be passed through sex, even if the infected person does not have symptoms at the time.
 - It can be passed from a person with Zika before his or her symptoms start, while they have symptoms, and after their symptoms end.
 - The virus may also be passed by a person who has been infected with the virus but never develops symptoms.

- Sexual exposure includes sex without a condom with a person who traveled to or lives in an area with risk of Zika.
 - This includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex and the sharing of sex toys.
 - Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that Zika can be passed through saliva during kissing.

To protect against the Zika virus, use latex or polyurethane condoms with a water-based or silicone-based lubricant. Condoms include [male](#) and [female](#) condoms. Lambskin condoms and condoms with a spermicide lubricant are not recommended and are less likely to protect against the Zika virus.

TRAVEL EXPOSURE

Possible exposures include traveling to areas with local mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus (<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>) and sexual contact with a person infected with Zika virus. For testing to be useful, exposure to Zika virus should have occurred within the past 12 weeks from the testing date.

- **If only the female traveler is exposed:** use condoms or do not have sex for **at least 2 months** after travel (if she doesn't have symptoms) or for **at least 2 months** from the start of her symptoms (or Zika diagnosis) before trying to conceive.
- **If only the male traveler is exposed:** use condoms or do not have sex for **at least 3 months** after travel (if he doesn't have symptoms) or for **at least 3 months** from the start of his symptoms (or Zika diagnosis) before trying to conceive. This period is longer for men because the Zika virus is known to stay in semen longer than in other body fluids.
- **If a male and female travel together and both are exposed:** use condoms or avoid having sex for **at least 3 months** after travel (if they don't have symptoms) or for **at least 3 months** from the start of symptoms (or Zika diagnosis) before trying to conceive.

Although sexual transmission of Zika virus is possible, the primary mode of transmission is through mosquitoes. CDC considers Zika virus infection a mosquito-borne infection, with less common modes of transmission being sexual, intrauterine, perinatal transmission, and the probability of transmission through blood transfusion.

Zika has rarely been transmitted in laboratory settings.

Zika virus testing is available through many commercial laboratories and the DOH Bureau of Laboratories (the state public health laboratory). For assistance with testing and other Zika virus-related questions, contact your local health department or DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH. **Reminder that submission of specimens for testing at DOH requires approval by your local health department.**

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.

This information is current as of August 16, 2018 but may be modified in the future.