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**#16-019**

**TO:** WIC Regional Directors  
WIC Local Agency Directors

**FROM:** Amanda Hovis, Director  
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit  
Nutrition Services Section

**DATE:** February 22, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Zika Virus in Texas

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The State Agency is providing several important updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) regarding the Zika virus. This information can be used to answer staff and participant questions and point participants to accurate sources of information and guidance.

### **Zika in Texas**

Texas currently has **12** cases of Zika virus disease. 11 are travelers who were infected abroad and diagnosed after they returned home. One case involves a Dallas County resident who had sexual contact with someone who acquired the Zika infection while traveling abroad. You can find the latest information about Zika in Texas at: <http://www.texaszika.org/>

### **Guidelines for Breastfeeding Women Regarding Zika**

The CDC's interim guidelines for evaluation and testing of infants with possible congenital Zika virus infection states that while RNA from the Zika virus has been found in breastmilk, no documented cases of transmission of the virus through breastfeeding have been reported. The CDC encourages breastfeeding of infants even in areas where the Zika virus is active, citing available evidence demonstrating that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any theoretical harm associated with transmission in breastmilk.

More info: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6503e3.htm>

### **Testing Guidelines for U.S. Health Care Providers Caring for Pregnant Women**

The CDC has updated its interim guidelines for U.S. health care providers caring for pregnant women during a Zika virus outbreak. Updated guidelines include a new recommendation to offer serologic testing to pregnant women who are not showing symptoms of Zika virus, but have traveled to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission. Testing can be offered 2 - 12 weeks after pregnant women return from travel. This update also expands guidance to women who reside in areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission, and includes recommendations for screening, testing, and management of pregnant women and recommendations for counseling women of reproductive age.

More info: [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e2er.htm?s\\_cid=mm6505e2er\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e2er.htm?s_cid=mm6505e2er_w)

### **Guidelines for Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus**

Sexual transmission of Zika virus is possible, and is of particular concern during pregnancy. According to CDC, men with a pregnant sex partner who reside in or have traveled to **an area of active Zika virus transmission** and their pregnant sex partners should consistently and correctly use condoms during sex or

abstain from sexual activity for the duration of the pregnancy. Couples in which a man resides in or has traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission who are concerned about sexual transmission of Zika virus may consider using condoms consistently and correctly during sex or abstaining from sexual activity.

More info: [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e1er.htm?s\\_cid=mm6505e1er\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e1er.htm?s_cid=mm6505e1er_w)

### **About Zika**

Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus. Infection with Zika virus is asymptomatic in an estimated 80% of cases. When Zika virus does cause illness, symptoms are generally mild and self-limited. Recent evidence suggests a possible association between maternal Zika virus infection and adverse fetal outcomes, such as congenital microcephaly, as well as a possible association with Guillain-Barré syndrome. Currently, no vaccine or medication exists to prevent or treat Zika virus infection.

There is currently no vaccine or medication to prevent Zika virus infection. All travelers to or residents of areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission should be advised to strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites because of the potential for exposure to Zika, dengue, and chikungunya viruses. Those returning from areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission are asked to avoid mosquito bites for a week following return in order to prevent the possible infection of Texas mosquitoes. Infection of Texas mosquitoes could lead to local transmission of Zika virus.

These steps include:

- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Staying in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleeping under a mosquito bed net if you are overseas or outside and are not able to protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- Using an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents.

For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/>