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PRESS RELEASE

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Health Advisory: Zika Virus

Kerrville, Texas (February 4, 2016) – What is the Zika Virus? How do you get it? What are the signs of the Zika Virus and how is it diagnosed? What are the symptoms? Can it be treated? The Texas Department of State Health Services and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have provided the following information.

Modes of Transmission

Zika virus, a flavivirus, is transmitted to humans primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. The mosquito vectors typically breed in domestic water-holding containers; they are aggressive daytime biters and feed both indoors and outdoors near dwellings. Perinatal, in utero, transfusion and sexual transmission may also occur. Although not currently transmitted in the continental United States, infections have been diagnosed in travelers returning from endemic areas ([see regularly updated map](#)).

Clinical Signs & Symptoms

About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become symptomatic. Characteristic clinical findings are acute onset of fever with maculopapular rash, arthralgia, or conjunctivitis. Because of similar geographic distribution and symptoms, patients with suspected Zika virus infections also should be evaluated and managed for possible dengue or chikungunya virus infection.

Diagnosis, Reporting, & Testing

Preliminary diagnosis is based on the patient's clinical features, places and dates of travel, and activities. Laboratory diagnosis is generally accomplished by testing serum or plasma to detect virus, viral nucleic acid, or virus-specific immunoglobulin M and neutralizing antibodies. Testing should occur for Zika, dengue and chikungunya simultaneously through the state laboratory. In Texas, dengue and chikungunya testing are available at the state laboratory and Zika through the CDC.

Treatment

No specific antiviral treatment is available for Zika virus disease. Treatment is generally supportive and can include rest, fluids, and use of analgesics and antipyretics. Because of similar geographic distribution and symptoms, patients with suspected Zika virus infections also should be evaluated and managed for possible dengue or chikungunya virus infection. Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of hemorrhage. People infected with Zika, chikungunya, or dengue virus should avoid mosquito bites. Furthermore, since it is not yet known if people with Zika who do not have symptoms can transmit the virus to Texas

mosquitoes, all travelers returning to Texas from [areas affected by Zika](#) avoid mosquito bites for one week following return from travel.

For more information, contact the Texas Department of State Health Services or the CDC.