



Disease Tool 15

Zika virus infection

Transmission

- Mosquito bite
- Mosquitoes that spread Zika virus usually bite during the day, especially in early morning and late afternoon or evening.
- During pregnancy the disease can pass from a mother to her unborn baby.
- Unprotected sex

Symptoms

- Many people infected with Zika virus have no symptoms or have only mild symptoms.
- Mild fever, skin rash, red eyes, muscle and joint pain, headache or feeling unwell.
- Getting Zika during pregnancy can cause serious brain defects in the unborn baby.
- Zika may cause a severe illness called Guillain-Barré syndrome, which causes sudden muscle weakness and can sometimes be life-threatening.

Prevention

- Prevention of mosquito bites by placing insect screens on windows and doors and personal protection (application of repellents, wearing long sleeved clothes, etc.)
- Community clean up campaigns to remove rubbish and garbage and cover water containers.
- Destruction of mosquito breeding sites by removing standing water, fogging, and applying larvicides.
- Social mobilization and behaviour change communication.
- Practice safe sex (applies to pregnant women, their partners, and travellers returning from areas in which Zika is present).
- Reproductive health counselling and support for couples who plan to have children and who live in areas where Zika is endemic.

Vulnerable people

- Any person in the community can get Zika.
- Zika is a particular concern for pregnant women, women and girls of reproductive age, and couples who want children and who live in area where Zika is endemic.
- Getting Zika during pregnancy can cause serious brain defects in an unborn baby.

If an epidemic occurs

- Increase community-based surveillance.
- Rapidly detect serious cases and refer them to health facilities.
- Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication.
- Promote community clean-up campaigns to remove rubbish and cover water containers.
- Promote prevention of mosquito bites by placing insect screens on windows and doors and wearing personal protection (apply repellents, wear long sleeved clothes, etc.).
- Give psychosocial support to mothers, families and babies born with brain defects.
- Eliminate mosquito breeding sites by removing standing water, fogging, and applying larvicides.
- Encourage young children and people who sleep during the day to sleep under a mosquito net (if windows and doors are not screened).
- Encourage the practice of safe sex (especially applies to pregnant women, their partners, and travellers who return from areas in which Zika is present).
- If possible, pregnant women should not travel to areas in which Zika is present.

Volunteers' action

See the following action tools for more information on how to take action against Zika virus disease:



Community-based assessment

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with Zika?
- How many people have fallen sick with Zika? Where?
- How many people have been severely ill with Guillain-Barré syndrome? How many have died? Where?
- Have any children been born with brain or head defects? How many?
- How many people live in the affected community or area? How many children under 5 years of age live in the area?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- How many pregnant women live in the affected communities?
- Do people usually cover their water containers (inside and outside)?
- How many houses have insect screens on the windows and doors?
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs regarding use of repellents, sprays, etc.?
- How do people in the community usually dispose of rubbish and solid waste?
- Have the authorities established a vector control programme?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers.)
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people? Do women continue to breastfeed babies and infants when they are sick?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- Which sources of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about Zika disease spreading in the community?