

News Release



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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End of Summer Travelers Urged to Take Precautions to Prevent Zika

SACRAMENTO – Travelers coming back from the Olympic Games in Rio and other vacation spots where the Zika virus is spreading are urged to take precautions upon return to help prevent the spread of the virus in California. While the virus is primarily transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes, it can also pass from one person to another during sex.

“Summer travelers who spent time in Brazil or any other region with Zika-infected mosquitoes can protect themselves, their families and community members by taking a few simple steps,” said California Department of Public Health Director and State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith. “Continue using insect repellent to prevent spreading the virus to mosquitoes in your community upon your return and refrain from unprotected sex so you don’t pass the virus to your partner.”

Men and women should use condoms for at least eight weeks after travel, and men who have tested positive for Zika should use condoms for six months to prevent transmission to their partners. Travelers returning from an affected region should also continue using insect repellent for three weeks to prevent the virus from spreading to mosquitoes, which might then infect others.

“Pregnant women and couples planning to have children need to be especially cautious because Zika can cause significant harm to a developing fetus,” said Dr. Smith. “Pregnant women who have traveled to an area with Zika should inform their doctor upon return, and couples returning from an affected area should speak with a doctor before getting pregnant.”

Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause severe birth defects, including microcephaly. Two infants with Zika-related microcephaly have been born in California this year to women who had Zika virus infections during pregnancy after spending time in an area where the virus is circulating in mosquitoes.

While mosquitoes that can carry the virus have been found in 12 California counties, there is no evidence these mosquitoes are transmitting Zika in the state at this time. A team of experts across several disciplines at CDPH is working closely with local public health departments, vector control agencies and the medical community to ensure that California is responding aggressively and appropriately to the emerging threat of Zika virus.

As of August 19, CDPH has confirmed 170 travel-associated Zika virus infections in 26 counties. A total of 24 infections have been confirmed in pregnant women.

For more information about Zika, visit the [CDPH Zika website](#), which includes the following resources:

[Zika and Travel](#)
[Zika and Pregnancy](#)
[Zika and Sex](#)
[Mosquito Bite Prevention](#)