

January 19, 2016

Over the past week, the news has reported information on the Zika virus.

This virus is transmitted by mosquito to humans. On this hemisphere, Zika has been reported in a number of countries in South and Central America (Brazil, Colombia, French Guiana, Paraguay, Suriname, Venezuela, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Mexico), Haiti, Martinique, Puerto Rico and Hawaii but not the continental US to date.

One in five to one in ten people who contract this virus will develop symptoms which include fever, rash, joint aches and conjunctivitis lasting several days to a week. The majority of people with symptoms are mild.

There is no treatment other than supportive care; rest, fluids, fever reducers, pain medications (Tylenol/Acetaminophen is recommended).

There is no vaccine for this virus..

The problem with the Zika virus is if a person is pregnant when Zika is contracted. If a fetus is exposed to Zika anytime during the pregnancy, the baby may be born with microcephalus (small brain).

The mode of transmission is by mosquito bite. If someone has the Zika virus and is bitten by a mosquito, that mosquito can transmit the virus to the next people it bites.

If a person returns from a Zika infested region, they should protect themselves from further mosquito bites for the next week or so. If the weather was warmer, that would mean mosquito repellent. Fortunately our current weather is not conducive for any mosquito activity.

There have been rare reports of human to human transmission; one with sexual activity and the other with blood transfusion. Otherwise, this virus is NOT spread like cold or flu viruses (in other words, you can't catch it from your friend)

Please call the Davison Health Center if you have any questions at 860-685-2470. The CDC website is www.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/zika-virus and www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html

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