



Zika Virus Infection in Utah

Questions and Answers for Utah Residents

July 18, 2016

1) What does this announcement mean to me as a Utah resident?

Utah health officials are reporting a new case of Zika virus infection (Zika) that may be associated with a Zika-related death. We are also informing residents that public health officials at the Utah Department of Health and the Salt Lake County Health Department are conducting a public health investigation of people involved in the new case being reported. We are trying to determine how the person became infected with Zika virus and if there might be other cases. We want to keep the public informed of our progress during this ongoing investigation, so please check this website for updates.

2) What does it mean that there is a new case of Zika virus infection (Zika) linked to a death in Utah?

We have a new case of Zika that is linked to a person whose death may have been related to Zika. We think this is a unique situation, as the new case is a family contact who helped care for the deceased patient.

This is not necessarily an indication that Zika virus can be spread from one person to another through contact with a sick person. There is still a lot we don't know about Zika virus, and we are working hard to find out more about this situation. The fact still remains:

- Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*).
- A pregnant woman can pass Zika virus to her fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth.
- A sex partner who is infected with Zika virus can pass it to his or her sex partners.

3) Did this new case help provide care to the deceased patient?

The person did help care for the deceased patient while they were sick.

4) Has the patient recovered?

Yes. As is true with most Zika patients, this person had a mild illness and has recovered without the need for hospitalization or intensive medical care.

5) Where was the new case exposed to Zika?

We cannot say for sure, but we are investigating whether the new case was infected with Zika virus while providing care for the deceased patient. We are also trapping and testing mosquitoes near locations where the new case and deceased person lived.

6) What sort of contact did this new case have with the person who passed away?

This is an important element of our investigation. The new case was caring for the patient before they passed away. We are trying to determine if the contact between the deceased person and the new case played a role in how the new case became infected. We don't have those answers right now, but we will continue to share information as it becomes available.

7) Does this change the risk to the general public?

We still believe the risk to the general public in Utah is low. Those at the highest risk of contracting Zika virus are people who travel to areas where Zika virus is being actively transmitted and those who have had sex with someone who has been infected with Zika virus or has traveled to an area with Zika. We would like to reiterate that the invasive mosquito species responsible for Zika virus transmission have NOT been detected in Utah, and that our native mosquito species are not known to be capable of transmitting Zika virus to people.

8) Is anyone else at risk?

Our investigation is focused on the people, including family and healthcare workers, who had close contact with the deceased patient. We do not believe there is any risk to the general public.

We continue to caution people who are traveling to countries where Zika is actively spreading to take the necessary precautions or to talk to their healthcare provider.

9) What is the current Zika virus situation in Utah?

This new case brings our total, statewide case count to eight. Seven of those eight cases had traveled to an area where Zika virus is being actively transmitted. One of those people has passed away.

10) What are public health officials doing to make sure the public is safe?

Utah public health officials are investigating how this new case became infected. As part of that investigation, officials are contacting and assessing people, including family contacts and healthcare workers, who had contact with the deceased patient as well as working to assess the risk of mosquito-borne spread of Zika, focusing on areas where the deceased patient stayed.

11) What are local mosquito abatement districts doing?

Local mosquito abatement districts are trapping and testing mosquitoes in areas where the deceased patient stayed. They will report their results to county and state health departments, who will keep the public informed.

12) Do you think Utah mosquitoes have adapted and may be able to carry the virus?

There is no evidence that mosquitoes in Utah are carrying Zika virus. We will continue to work closely with mosquito abatement districts to trap and test mosquitoes to see if this changes.

Mosquito abatement districts are trapping and testing mosquitoes that live in areas where the deceased man stayed. The types of mosquitoes that spread Zika (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*) are not typically found in Utah. *Aedes aegypti* was found in the southwestern part of the state several years ago, but they have not been found there since then (see the [CDC maps](#) that show the estimated range of the two mosquito species that spread Zika).

As always, we encourage Utah residents to protect themselves from mosquito bites. Mosquitoes in Utah can spread West Nile virus. Remember to use insect repellents that have been registered by the Environmental Protection Agency and recommended by the CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/faq/repellent.html>), wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants, use or repair screens on windows and doors, use air conditioning when available, and remove standing water where mosquitoes lay eggs.

13) Should pregnant women be concerned about getting sick with Zika virus if they are in Utah or traveling to Utah?

At this time, pregnant women or women trying to become pregnant should not be concerned about getting Zika virus in Utah. However, pregnant women should continue to take the precautions that we have already advised.

- **For couples with a partner who has [traveled](#) to an area with Zika**
 - If the partner who traveled has been diagnosed with Zika or has (or had) symptoms, the couple should use condoms or not have sex for the duration of the pregnancy.
- **For couples with a partner living in an area with Zika**
 - If the partner has been diagnosed with Zika or has (or had) symptoms, the couple should consider using condoms or not having sex for **at least 6 months** after symptoms begin.
 - If the partner has never developed symptoms, the couple should consider using condoms or not having sex **while there is Zika in the area**.
- **Couples who are not pregnant and considering these options should weigh the personal risks and benefits, including**
 - The mild nature of the illness for many people. In many cases, Zika does not cause any symptoms or causes only mild symptoms lasting several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.
 - Plans for pregnancy (if appropriate)
 - Access to condoms and other contraception
 - Desire for intimacy, including willingness to use condoms or not have sex
 - Ability to use condoms or not have sex

14) Does this mean Zika virus can now be passed from one person to another by sneezing, coughing, touching, sharing utensils, or other forms of contact?

We do not have any evidence to indicate that Zika virus can be passed from one person to another by sneezing, coughing, touching, or sharing utensils. The new case being reported is a family contact of an individual who died from unknown causes and who had been infected with Zika after traveling to an area with Zika. The new case helped provide care for the deceased patient, but we still do not know exactly how the family contact became infected with Zika. There is still a lot we don't know about Zika virus. We hope this case will help us learn more about how the virus can spread so we can provide people with the information they need to protect themselves.

15) How will I know if someone is sick with Zika?

Many people who are infected with Zika virus won't have symptoms or will have only mild symptoms. The sickness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other symptoms include muscle pain and headache.

16) Should I be concerned when I'm caring for someone who has Zika?

The case being reported today is unique. Public health investigators are trying to determine how the new case became infected with Zika. At this time, we are not recommending that those caring for people with Zika take any particular precautions beyond regular good hygiene practices. Public health investigators will report information as it becomes available.

17) How should I care for a person who is sick with Zika?

There is no specific medicine or vaccine for Zika virus. You can treat the symptoms. Encourage the sick person to:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Take medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain.
- Do not take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of bleeding.
- Talk to their doctor or other healthcare provider if they are taking medicine for another medical condition before taking additional medication.