



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
February 4, 2016

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Cautions Those Who Plan Travel to Areas Where Zika Virus is Being Transmitted**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Zika virus has recently been transmitted in numerous areas of the Americas and the Caribbean, many of which are popular winter vacation and wedding destinations for North Dakotans. Zika virus has presented particular concern for women who are or plan to become pregnant and their babies, but the virus has the potential to make others ill as well. Although the mosquitos that are known to carry the virus are not found in North Dakota, travelers to affected areas can become infected there and bring the disease back with them.

Zika virus may cause no illness or symptoms, or may cause a mild illness that can include fever, rash, joint pain, muscle pain, headache and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Symptoms, if any, arise within 14 days of exposure. The primary concern of public health officials is that the virus may be linked with a serious birth defect called microcephaly if the mother is infected during pregnancy. Microcephaly is a condition in which babies are born with smaller than normal heads and brains, which may lead to health complications and a variety of disabilities.

“Pregnant women or those who plan to become pregnant should reconsider and postpone, if possible, any travel to areas where Zika virus is known or suspected to be present,” according to Laura Cronquist, epidemiologist with the Division of Disease Control. “These women should consult with their health care provider before they travel to areas with Zika virus transmission. There is no cure or vaccine for Zika virus, so preventing infection is very important,” said Cronquist.

Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito. A number of other illnesses, including dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever, are also transmitted by mosquitoes in certain areas. Anyone who travels to countries where these diseases exist should take standard precautions against mosquito bites, such as using an EPA registered insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants, and staying in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

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Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).

People who are planning travel to other countries should consult with their healthcare providers for travel health information so that they can have the safest, healthiest trip possible. In addition, people who become ill during or after returning home from foreign travel should contact their health care provider and mention their recent travel.

For more information contact Laura Cronquist at 1.800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378. Additional information about Zika virus can be found at [www.cdc.gov/zika/](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/) . Travel information regarding where Zika virus is being transmitted can be found at [www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html) .

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