Zika virus is spread to people through mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Some individuals do not have obvious symptoms, i.e. asymptomatic. This can be especially problematic for women of child-bearing age. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.

In May 2015, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issued an alter regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infection in Brazil. The outbreak in Brazil led to reports of Guillain-Barre syndrome and pregnant women giving birth to babies with birth defects and poor pregnancy outcomes. Some companies are discouraging pregnant or women planning to become pregnant from travel to affected areas, and if traveling to these areas to take proper precautions with respect to day-to-day living, with special attention to sexual practices, including post return home. This is especially important due to the fact that some individuals may be asymptomatic.

In response to these concerns, the CDC has issued travel notices for people traveling to regions and certain countries where Zika virus transmissions is ongoing.


For insect precautions, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is generally a day biting mosquito, so insect repellent is the mainstay of protection during the day. There are 3 products approved by the CDC (DEET, Picaridin, lemon oil of eucalyptus) for international insect protection.

Specialists usually recommend between 25-50% DEET based products. Preferred are the sustained release products, like Ultrathon, that have about 33% DEET. Over 50% gives you a longer protection time, but you can achieve that with a lower concentration in a sustained release formulation. Review product material for recommendations on when to reapply for necessary protection. For those who are concerned or will be traveling during a peak mosquito density time, they can also apply permethrin to their clothing (permethrin is a synthetic OTC insecticide). If you use sun-screen, apply insect repellent afterwards.

Also, review your housing/accommodations, avoiding any standing water. Use air conditioner whenever possible. Check screened window and doors for any openings and secure immediate repair. Duct tape can provide short-term repair.

Wear clothing to protect your skin surfaces from mosquito bite. Long pants and long-sleeved tops should be worn with socks and full shoes having no exposed surfaces. They should be sprayed with permethrin. Also, use a hat covering treated with an insecticide. Contact your medical provider for any further personal direction.