



On the Alert!

February 2016

Zika Virus

In light of the recent media attention regarding Zika virus, to date, local vector-borne transmission of Zika virus has not been identified in the continental United States.¹ However, ASCIP aims to provide members with background information and prevention protocols to safeguard students, staff, and the school community.

Zika virus is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito². The *Aedes* mosquito was originally found mainly in tropical areas, but is now found on all continents. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. The virus can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week, affecting about 1 in 5 people. The disease has been around for decades in other regions of the world but has become a major concern for U.S. public health officers after Brazilian health authorities have reported it may be the cause for a dramatic increase in the number of infants born with microcephaly, a congenital, abnormal smallness of the head that is often associated with brain damage. Anyone who is living in or traveling to an area where Zika virus is found, who has not already been infected with Zika virus, is at risk for infection, including pregnant women.

Ways to prevent Zika virus disease— When possible, avoid travel to countries where Zika virus is actively spreading. For the most current travel information, please click [here](#).

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika. The best way to prevent contracting this disease is to protect yourself from mosquito bites. Mosquitoes generally bite in the early morning and evening hours. Students and staff should protect themselves by wearing protective clothing, using approved repellants, and utilizing proper barriers (i.e., netting/screens) when in areas with high mosquito presence.

Furthermore, schools/sites should ensure there are no areas with standing water which might support the breeding of mosquitoes. The local County Vector Control Agency will address issues and inquiries related to mosquitoes and how to implement prudent control measures.

You can obtain more information about the Zika virus disease can from the [California Department of Public Health](#) or the County health department of your District. Other data sources include the [World Health Organization](#) and the [CDC](#). ASCIP will continue to monitor developments of this disease. In the interim, please contact Risk Services Staff at (562) 404-8029 with any questions or concerns.

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/disease-ga.html>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/entomologyEcology/index.html>