

## Statement on the Zika Virus

The University of Denver (DU) continues to monitor outbreak information related to the Zika virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued an Alert Level 2 (Practice Enhanced Precautions) for people traveling to Zika transmission areas. Specific [areas where Zika is spreading](#) are often difficult to determine and are likely to change over time.

At this point in time, DU has not restricted travel to any areas because of risk of Zika transmission. If traveling to a Zika transmission area, please visit [the CDC Travelers' Health site](#) and [International SOS](#) using your DU membership number for more information about the virus, mosquito bite prevention, and travel recommendations. Travelers with specific health questions should contact their health care providers.

Zika virus disease (Zika) is a disease caused by the Zika virus, which is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. Although Zika is primarily a mosquito-borne disease, meaning it is transmitted to people through the bite of infected mosquitoes, sexual transmission from men to women is increasingly being reported. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected. In rare cases, some people develop [Guillain-Barré syndrome](#) (GBS), which is an uncommon sickness that is very likely triggered by Zika. Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called [microcephaly](#), as well as other severe fetal brain defects.

There is no vaccine to prevent or specific medicine to treat Zika infections. Symptoms should be treated with plenty of rest, fluids to prevent dehydration, and acetaminophen to relieve fever and pain. See your healthcare provider if you develop more severe symptoms and have recently traveled to an area with active Zika transmission.

Among the CDC's recommendations for protection against mosquito bites are to:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are overseas or outside and are not able to protect yourself from mosquito bites.
- Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered insect repellents](#). When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breast-feeding women.
- Treat clothing and gear with Permethrin or purchase Permethrin-treated items. See product information to learn how long the protection will last.

The CDC also recommends special precautions for pregnant women and those trying to become pregnant:

- Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to the areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.
- Pregnant women who must travel to one of these areas should talk to their doctors or other health care providers first and strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites during the trip.
- Until more is known, pregnant women or those trying to become pregnant with male sex partners who have lived in or traveled to an area with Zika virus should either [use a condom](#) every time they have sex or not have sex during the pregnancy.
- Women trying to become pregnant should consult with their health care providers before traveling to these areas and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.

**Resources:**

DU's Health and Counseling Center: <http://www.du.edu/health-and-counseling-center/>

International SOS: <https://www.internationalsos.com/>

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): <https://step.state.gov/step/>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

U.S. Department of State Travel Resources:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go.html>

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/zika/information-for-travelers/en/>