

# ZIKA VIRUS SEMEN STUDY



## Frequently Asked Questions

If you have questions related to Zika virus, please see the FAQs below. Additional CDC resources on Zika virus (MMWR, health advisory notices, other websites, etc.) follow the FAQs. If you have other questions about the study, please contact us at [ZikaMalesStudy@cdc.gov](mailto:ZikaMalesStudy@cdc.gov) or [970.221.6400](tel:970.221.6400)

### What is Zika virus infection?

Zika virus infection is most often transmitted to people through mosquito bites, though sexual transmission has also been documented. Most people who are infected with Zika virus never have any symptoms at all. About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus experience mild illness. The most common symptoms include fever, joint pains, rash, or conjunctivitis (red eye). These symptoms typically resolve on their own within a week.

There are reports from Brazil, which has a large number of Zika virus infections, that children born to women who had Zika virus infection during pregnancy have a higher risk of a condition called microcephaly. Microcephaly is a birth defect in which the head and/or brain of the baby does not develop normally. The connection between Zika virus infection and microcephaly is not well understood. Zika virus infection in a mother does not mean a child will definitely develop microcephaly. However, pregnant women who have had a Zika virus infection should be monitored closely throughout their pregnancy in accordance with CDC guidance:

(<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6502e1.htm>).

### What does it mean if my samples of urine or semen test positive for Zika virus RNA?

If you have a positive test, it means that we found fragments of the virus (RNA) in your urine and/or semen. At the end of the study, we will tell you in which sample we found the fragments of the virus and for how long the virus was found in your samples. There is a very small chance that this test can give a positive result that is wrong; this is called a false positive result.

### What does it mean if my samples test negative for Zika virus RNA?

A negative test for Zika virus usually means that Zika virus RNA was not present in your urine or semen samples at detectable levels. However, negative results do not rule out Zika virus infection and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or other patient management decisions.

### If you find RNA in my samples, how do I prevent passing Zika virus to others?

During the first week of infection, Zika virus can be found in the blood and passed from an infected person to an uninfected person through mosquito bites. To help prevent others from getting sick, avoid mosquito bites (see below) during the first week of illness.

There is evidence that the Zika virus can be sexually transmitted by a man to his partner. We do not know if women can sexually transmit Zika to her partners. Until you receive your test results, you should use a condom correctly every time you have sex. We do not know for how long the virus will remain in semen. This study will help us to understand whether Zika virus is found in urine and saliva.

# ZIKA VIRUS FAQs, continued



**If you find RNA in my semen and my partner is trying to become pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, how long do we need to wait before trying to get pregnant?**

We do not know how long the Zika virus is present in semen for men with recent infection. One report found the virus in semen at least two weeks after illness. No follow up testing was done to determine when the man no longer had Zika virus in his semen. At this time, we do not know how long the Zika virus can be sexually transmitted from a male partner with recent infection. We will tell you your results after you have submitted all of your samples. We do not know how long after finding RNA in your semen it is safe to get pregnant. Please see the following for more information on sexual transmission of Zika virus: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/transmission/sexual-transmission.html> and <http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00388.asp>

**How do I prevent Zika virus infection through mosquito bites?**

No vaccine exists to prevent Zika virus infection. Prevent Zika virus infection by avoiding mosquito bites. Mosquitoes that spread Zika virus bite mostly during the daytime. Mosquitoes that spread Zika virus also spread dengue and chikungunya viruses. Some of the ways to prevent Zika virus or other viruses spread by mosquitoes are:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net
- 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. Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.

Treat clothing and gear with permethrin or purchase permethrin-treated items.

**For other questions, refer to the following resources:**

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All Countries and Territories with Active Zika Virus Transmission

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/active-countries.html>

Fact Sheets and Posters

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/fs-posters/index.html>

MMWR Zika Virus Reports

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/zika\\_reports.html](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/zika_reports.html)

Zika Virus Travel Information

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-information>

Update: Interim Guidelines for Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus — United States, 2016

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00388.asp>