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CONSTITUENT INFORMATION
RESOURCE: ZIKA

The current reports about Zika's threat to pregnant women are very troubling. [According to the Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), Metro Atlanta and the entire state of Georgia are well within the range of the mosquitoes that spread this illness.

This document is a compilation of various federal resources and seeks to explain and summarize --

- [Basic Facts](#)
- [Symptoms](#)
- [Transmission](#)
- [Prevention methods](#)

My office developed this guide in response to general constituent concerns and in particular to share information with women and families considering pregnancy.

Please feel free to share this document with your families, friends, and neighbors. We will update this document on my [website](#) as more information becomes available.

As always, for individual, specific questions and concerns about your health, you should contact your personal provider.

ZIKA BASICS

- The virus was first discovered in 1947 and is named after the Zika Forest in Uganda. Although in existence in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands, the first known case in the Americas occurred in 2015. Zika can be difficult to identify because the symptoms are similar to many other diseases.
- The Zika virus is a disease spread primarily through the bite of infected mosquitoes, but it can also be sexually transmitted.
- The virus lasts about one week and the symptoms are similar to a mild flu.
- Zika is not fatal, but for pregnant women Zika has been linked to serious birth defects.
- People with the Zika virus are contagious for about a week, and maybe as long as two months for sexual transmission. We are still unsure how long Zika can be sexually transmitted.
- Zika causes at least one very serious birth defect called *microcephaly* (my-kroh-SEF-uh-lee). Babies born with microcephaly will have significantly smaller heads than other children of the same age and sex. In the majority of cases, microcephaly causes severe brain damage.
- Last year, the CDC issued guidance for medical professionals to test for Zika; results are available after three weeks. More information is available online: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/diagnostic.html>

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Symptoms of Zika include - Fever, rash, headache, muscle and joint pain, inflammation of the underside of the eyelid, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito.
- We suspect that Zika virus can be present and cause birth defects without the mother experiencing symptoms.

THE TRUTH ABOUT TRANSMISSION

Travelers: It is vital to prevent the spread of Zika to U.S. mosquitoes. This is an important step in stopping new infections. Consequently, even if you do not feel sick, travelers returning to the U.S. from an area with Zika should take steps to deter mosquito bites for 3 weeks to be safe. If you have recently traveled, tell your doctor or other healthcare provider when and where you traveled. [Check the CDC website for Zika Travel Information.](#)

Vaccine: There is no vaccine or medicine to prevent or treat Zika virus. Therefore, it is vital that everyone take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and reduce the potential for infection.

Pregnancy: We are learning more every day but our first priority is to protect pregnant woman. Although the virus stays in blood and saliva for about one week, we do not know how long the virus can stay in the semen of men who have had Zika, and how long the virus can be spread through sex.

Consequently, the CDC recommends that the partners of a pregnant woman or a woman who may become pregnant use a condom.

The CDC estimates that four out of five people with Zika do not know that they are infected. Although people are contagious for about a week, a person with Zika should not have unprotected sex for at least two months.

Stop mosquitoes!!!

Regularly clear all standing water
from:

Vases, pet water bowls, flowerpot saucers, discarded tires, buckets, pool covers, birdbaths, trash cans, and rain barrels.

TIPS FOR A SAFE SUMMER

According to the CDC, mosquitoes that spread Zika virus bite mostly during the daytime. Currently, no vaccine exists to prevent Zika, so the best way to avoid infection is avoid mosquito bites. Here are a few tips to help:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- If you are overseas or unable to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home, sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Mosquitoes can lay eggs inside and outside your home! **Once a week**, empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or throw out all containers that hold water.
- Use [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-registered](#) insect repellents with at least one of the following active ingredients:
 - **DEET**
 - **picaridin**
 - **IR3535**
 - **oil of lemon eucalyptus**
 - **para-menthane-diol**

Buyer Beware!

The Federal Trade Commission has issued a strong warning that some companies may be trying to unscrupulously capitalize on fears about the virus. Be sure to only use insect repellents with EPA registered ingredients.