Information for Pregnant Women Veterans about Zika virus

Transmission

You can get the Zika virus:

- Through the bite of an infected mosquito
- Through unprotected sex with a man infected with Zika Virus.

Zika virus can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus during pregnancy or at delivery

Risks

- Infection with Zika during pregnancy is linked to birth defects in babies.
- Individuals with Zika infection have also developed Guillain Barre syndrome (progressing weakness starting in your lower extremities)

Testing and Follow up care

If you are pregnant and have traveled to an area where the Zika virus is present:

- Go to your nearest VA for Zika Virus testing (All VA Medical Centers can test Veterans for Zika virus).
- You will need to be followed by an OB/GYN with multiple ultrasounds throughout your pregnancy.
- There is a maternity care coordinator and/or a Women Veteran Program Manager at every VA medical center who can answer your questions on maternity care coverage. Or call Women Veterans Call Center - 1-855-829-6636 for information on WVPM nearest to your location.

Prevention

No vaccine exists to prevent Zika virus disease:

- To prevent getting Zika, avoid travel to an area with Zika.
- If you must travel or you live in an area where Zika is present, take steps to avoid mosquito bites.

Prevent Zika virus by avoiding mosquito bites:

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents. When used as directed, these insect repellents are safe and effective for pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- Prevent sexual transmission of Zika by using condoms or not having sex.

Zika and Pregnancy

Zika is linked to birth defects. If you are trying to become pregnant, talk to your provider about your plans. Would you like to become pregnant in the next year? If the answer is "No", talk with your health care provider about contraceptive options for preventing pregnancy. VA provides a wide range of contraceptive options for Veterans.

Symptoms of Zika Virus are often mild and last for several days to a week after being bit by a mosquito.
Symptoms include:

- fever
- rash
- joint pain
- red eyes

VA HEALTH CARE | Defining EXCELLENCE in the 21st Century

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Women's Health Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration, Washington, DC 20420