



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Zika Virus (ZIKV) Infection

1. What is Zika Virus (ZIKV) infection?

This is an emerging mosquito-borne disease caused by the Zika virus which is an *Aedes* mosquito-borne flavivirus closely related to dengue, yellow fever, West Nile or Japanese encephalitis virus.

2. How is ZIKV infection spread?

The disease is spread by the bite of an infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. The ZIKV is transmitted when the female *Aedes* mosquito bites an infected person and then bites other people.

3. Does Jamaica have the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes?

Yes. It is commonly found in Jamaica and is the same mosquito that transmits the dengue and Chikungunya fever virus.

4. What are the habits of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito ?

- The *Aedes aegypti* bites primarily in the day but will also bite at any other time during the day. It will almost always be found in and around homes, schools, workplaces, and other places where people gather.

- The mosquito breeds in any type of container where water is allowed to settle. The most common breeding sites are drums, tyres and containers in and around the home, school, workplace and communities.
- The *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes produce on average 100 to 200 eggs per batch. Laid eggs can survive for very long periods in a dry state, often for more than a year.
- The life span of the adult mosquito is 2 weeks to a month

5. What are the symptoms of ZIKV?

The most common symptoms of ZIKV are:

- mild to severe fever
- non-purulent conjunctivitis (pink eye without the sticky substance)
- joint pains
- headache
- myalgia (muscle pain)
- oedema (swelling) in lower limb
- weakness
- rash (which may itch)

Persons may also experience:

- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- loss of appetite
- abdominal pain

Complications (neurological, autoimmune) are rare and have only been identified in the epidemic in French Polynesia.

As at May 21, 2015 no death attributed to Zika virus infection has been reported in any of the outbreaks

6. How soon after being bitten by the infected mosquito will I experience symptoms?

Symptoms are usually experienced 3 to 12 days after being bitten by the infected mosquito. At this time, the evidence shows that symptoms will last for a period of 4 to 7 days and are self-limiting.

7. Who is at risk for more severe symptoms?

- Infants
- The elderly
- Women in an advanced stage of pregnancy
- Persons with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, heart diseases, hypertension and sickle cell disease.

8. What is the treatment for ZIKV?

There is no specific medication for the treatment of Zika Virus infection. Pain killers can be taken to reduce the fever and pain. However, only Paracetamol and Acetaminophen pain killers should be used. **DO NOT TAKE** pain killers such as aspirin, ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatory drugs.

Persons who think they have Zika Virus infection should report to their doctor or nearest Health Centre. Persons should also rest, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid mosquito bites.

9. What can be done to reduce the risk of getting ZIKV?

There is no vaccine to prevent the Zika virus. The best prevention is to:

A. Reduce or eliminate mosquito breeding sites as follows:

- Check premises weekly for water-filled containers.
- Throw away or recycle water containers that are not needed
- Cover containers such as drums or old appliances which must be stored, covered, turned over or placed under a roof that does not allow them to fill with water
- Clean and scrub flower vases and pet's water containers weekly and dump the water from overflow saucers under potted plants and flower pots.
- Clear roof gutters and eaves to prevent water from settling
- Fill tree holes and other cavities in plants with soil or sand
- Repair leaking pipes and outside faucets

B. Protect yourself from mosquito bites by using a mosquito repellent that contains DEET, IR3535 or Icaridin, sleep under a mosquito net, wear light coloured clothing and cover body as much as possible.

10. Since there is no vaccine against ZIKV, what should I do if I travel to a country where there is an outbreak of ZIKV infection?

- You should take the necessary measures to protect yourself from mosquito bites through use of repellents or use of appropriate clothes that minimize skin exposure
- Avoid mosquito-infested areas.
- Seek medical attention if symptoms of dengue, chikungunya, and Zika fever occur

11. What actions are being taken by the Ministry of Health to address Zika Virus?

The Ministry has heightened its preparedness and response in the following areas:

- Surveillance
- Public Education
- Clinical Management
- Vector Control
- Laboratory Strengthening
- Training
- Social Mobilization
- Intersectoral Collaboration
- International Corporation
- Resource Management

12. How can individuals/communities help prevent mosquito breeding?

Mosquito prevention is everybody's business. You can do your part to prevent mosquito breeding:

- Organize cleanup activities in your communities
- Identify, prevent or eliminate mosquito breeding sites to your
- Report mosquito breeding sites that will require assistance from relevant authorities
- See your doctor immediately if you think you or a family member might have ZIKV infection

13. Where can I get more information on Zika Virus?

You can call:

- Toll Free line, 1-888- ONE LOVE (1-888-663-5683)
- Your Parish Health Department,

You can visit the Ministry of Health's website at www.moh.gov.jm

You can like and follow us on:

www.facebook.com/themohgovjm
<https://twitter.com/themohgovjm>
<https://instagram.com/themohgovjm>

