Zika Virus

1. **Overview**

Zika is a disease caused by a virus spread by infected mosquitoes. Zika virus is typically found in tropical and subtropical areas of Africa, the Americas, Southern Asia, and the Western Pacific. Illness is generally mild, but infection during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects and is associated with other pregnancy problems.

2. **Symptoms**

Many people infected with Zika virus will not have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease (Zika) are:

- Fever
- Rash
- Headache
- Joint pain
- Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
- Muscle pain



3. **Complications**

Zika is generally mild. Hospitalization and death from Zika are uncommon.

Zika infection during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects and is associated with other pregnancy problems, including fetal loss, stillbirth and preterm birth.

Rarely, Zika infection may cause Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). GBS is a sickness in which a person's own immune system damages their nerve cells causing muscle weakness and sometimes, paralysis. These symptoms can last a few weeks or several months. Most people fully recover from GBS, though some people have permanent damage. Very few people die from GBS caused by Zika infection.

In rare cases, Zika may cause severe disease affecting the brain, causing swelling of the brain (encephalitis), tissues around the brain (meningitis) or spinal cord (myelitis). Zika may also cause a blood disorder which can result in bleeding, bruising, or slow blood clotting.

4. Treatment

There are no antiviral treatments available for Zika virus disease. Treatment is generally supportive and can include rest, fluids, and use of analgesics and antipyretics.

Because of similar geographic distribution and symptoms, patients with suspected Zika virus infections also should be evaluated and managed for possible dengue or chikungunya virus infection. Aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to

reduce the risk of hemorrhage. People infected with Zika, chikungunya, or dengue virus should avoid mosquito exposure during the first few days of illness to prevent other mosquitoes from becoming infected and reduce the risk of further transmission.

Carefully monitor pregnant women with laboratory evidence of Zika virus infection. Closely manage these patients during pregnancy and carefully evaluate live-born infants for clinical features associated with intrauterine infection. See guidance for the diagnosis, evaluation, and management of infants with possible congenital Zika virus infections.

5. **Preventing**

Mosquitoes bite during the day and night. You can prevent bites to reduce your risk of getting an infection.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Control mosquitoes indoors and outdoors, such as using window screens.

Even if someone does not feel sick, people returning to the United States from an area with a risk of Zika should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks so they do not spread Zika virus to mosquitoes that could spread it to other people.

Zika virus can be passed through sex from a person with Zika to their partner(s).

- Sex includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex and the sharing of sex toys.
- Zika virus can be passed through sex even in a committed relationship with a single partner.
- The timeframes that males and females can pass the virus through sex are different because the virus can stay in semen longer than in other body fluids.

Information from WHO