

# ZIKA VIRUS AND SEX



## INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS TO ZIKA-AFFECTED COUNTRIES OR AREAS AND THEIR PARTNERS



- ✓ Follow mosquito bite prevention measures and practice safe sex when travelling.
- ✓ Always use **condoms correctly** or **avoid sex** to protect yourself and others following travel to a Zika-affected country or affected area. Infectious Zika can stay in semen and vaginal fluids for a prolonged period of time.
- ✓ Men should practice safe sex or avoid sex for **3 months** and women for **2 months following travel or illness due to Zika virus (whichever is longer)** in order to prevent sexual transmission.

### TRAVELLERS NEED TO KNOW:



- Zika virus can spread through the bite of an **infected mosquito** or through **sexual contact**, including vaginal, anal, and oral sex as well as the sharing of sex toys with an infected man or woman.
- Most people infected with Zika virus will have no symptoms or will have only mild symptoms.
- You can spread Zika virus before symptoms appear, while you have symptoms, and for a period of time after symptoms have resolved. You can even spread Zika virus if you are infected but have no symptoms at all.

### WHO SHOULD BE CONCERNED:

#### Pregnant women and couples:

- Zika virus can be passed from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby.
- The health risks are greatest for babies born to women infected during pregnancy, as the virus can cause severe birth defects.
- To prevent infection use condoms correctly or avoid sex, for the duration of the pregnancy.

#### Couples planning a pregnancy:

- **Women** should wait **2 months after travel or after the onset of illness due to Zika (whichever is longer)**, before trying to conceive. This will ensure that any possible Zika virus infection has cleared the body.
- **Men** should wait **3 months after travel or after the onset of illness due to Zika (whichever is longer)**, before trying for a pregnancy because infectious Zika has been found in the semen of some infected men for a prolonged period of time after onset of illness. During that time, men should:
  - ✓ always use condoms correctly; or
  - ✓ avoid having sex.



**Talk to a health care professional if you have travelled to a Zika-affected country or area and are concerned about possible infection.**

For more information visit: [Canada.ca/zika-virus](https://Canada.ca/zika-virus)

