

**DATE:** March 28, 2016 **END DATE:** April 30, 2016

**CONTACT:** Christine Rygiel, MPH, MB (ASCP)  
Epidemiologist

**PHONE:** (810) 257-3815

**RE:** Zika virus

With Spring Break travel on the horizon, the Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) wants to keep everyone informed about the travel recommendations around the Zika virus infection. Zika is a disease caused by the Zika virus that is spread primarily through bites of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. There have been cases of transmission via sexual contact or from a mother to her unborn child. A woman infected during pregnancy can pass the Zika virus to her child, which could possibly lead to microcephaly, which leaves newborns with reduced head size and an underdeveloped brain. While information continues to develop, the CDC recommends special travel precautions for pregnant women.

Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to areas where the Zika virus is present. If you must travel, talk with your healthcare physician before and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites while traveling. Women who plan to become pregnant should speak to their physician about their plans to become pregnant and the risks of the Zika virus infection before traveling to an area that has a Zika virus travel advisory. The best method of prevention against the Zika virus during travel to an infected area is to avoid mosquito bites by following these steps:

1. Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants
2. Stay in places with air conditioning or use window/door screens to keep mosquitos out, or use a mosquito net if you are not able to protect yourself from bites
3. Use EPA-registered insect repellent, and follow the instuctions carefully before use

The GCHD has developed a protocol to coordinate screening and testing for suspect cases of Zika virus infections with healthcare providers and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Bureau of Laboratories (BOL). The GCHD currently has three tests pending. It continues to share information on the Zika virus with healthcare and community groups throughout the county as new developments arise from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The GCHD wants you to stay healthy during your travels this spring. Visit our website at [www.gchd.us](http://www.gchd.us) or visit [www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika) for more Zika virus resources and information.

2 of 2