

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dear Baltimore City Clinicians,

In the coming weeks, your patients may be traveling for Spring Break to an area with active Zika virus transmission. We want to highlight current knowledge about Zika virus disease transmission and prevention to assist you with counseling your patients.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports over 100 travel-acquired Zika virus cases and zero locally acquired vector-borne cases in the continental United States. The CDC is investigating several reports of possible sexual transmission of the virus, including those that involve pregnant women.

Recommendations for men and their pregnant partners. The CDC continues to recommend that pregnant women postpone travel. Men who are considering travelling to areas with active Zika virus transmission, who have sexual partners who are pregnant or women of reproductive age, should use prevention measures to limit mosquito bites. Men who reside in or have traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission who have a pregnant partner should abstain from sexual activity (i.e., vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, or fellatio) or use condoms consistently for the duration of the pregnancy. Pregnant women should discuss their male partner's potential exposures to mosquitoes and history of Zika-like illness (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/symptoms>) with their health care provider; providers can consult CDC's guidelines for evaluation and testing of pregnant women (6).

Recommendations for men and their nonpregnant sex partners. Men who reside in or have traveled to an area of active Zika virus transmission who are concerned about sexual transmission of Zika virus might consider abstaining from sexual activity or using condoms.

Clinician Recommendations for Zika Testing. As mentioned in previous letters, clinicians should screen all patients for a travel history. For up to date information about high risk areas, please refer to the CDC website (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.) Report patients with travel history and symptoms to the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) Office of Acute Communicable Diseases at 410-396-4436. We will discuss the case with you and determine if testing is necessary. Testing is currently recommended as follows:

- 1) Asymptomatic pregnant women with travel history or who become pregnant within 2 weeks of travel; and
- 2) Symptomatic travelers (adults and children, male and female) with 2 or more major symptoms (fever, rash, conjunctivitis, arthralgia) AND symptom onset within 2 weeks of last day in a Zika-affected country.
- 3) Maternal-infant transmission of Zika virus is possible during delivery. Infants less than 2 weeks of age who have 2 or more major symptoms(fever, rash, conjunctivitis, arthralgias), AND whose mothers traveled to an affected area within 2 weeks of delivery, should also be considered for Zika testing. For more information about children and Zika virus see the most updated CDC guidelines (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6507e1.htm>)

This is a quickly evolving situation. We are working very closely with State and federal officials and recommend that you **regularly check the CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>) and BCHD website (<http://health.baltimorecity.gov/zika-virus>) for the most recent updates.**

Sincerely,

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Commissioner of Health

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