



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Spring Break Travelers Reminded to Protect Themselves against Zika**  
*CDC Considers Travel to Mexico, Latin America a Potential Risk for Infection*

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) advises spring break travelers vacationing in warmer climates to protect themselves from mosquito bites and avoid unprotected sex in areas with known transmission of the Zika virus.

“Spring break is the perfect time to have fun in the sun, but it is important that people take precautions to prevent Zika,” said CDPH Director and State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith. “Unfortunately, the mosquitoes that spread Zika enjoy warm weather too.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers any travel to Mexico and most of Latin America to be a potential risk for Zika virus infection. Local transmission of the Zika virus has been reported in many areas of Mexico, including states with popular tourist destinations such as Ensenada, a coastal city approximately 85 miles south of San Diego, Baja California Sur (Cabo San Lucas) and Sonora, which borders Arizona.

Zika virus can spread through mosquito bites and can also be transmitted by both men and women during sex. Sexually active people who travel to areas with Zika transmission should use condoms or other barriers to avoid getting or passing Zika. Condoms will help reduce the chance of sexual transmission of the Zika virus, but should not be the only form of contraception for pregnancy prevention. Most people who are infected with Zika do not experience symptoms (fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes), but they should still take precautions to avoid sexual transmission.

In particular, young women who could become pregnant, pregnant women and couples considering pregnancy need to be cautious because Zika virus can cause severe birth defects. Couples planning pregnancy when either partner has been exposed to Zika virus should speak with a health care provider about a safe time to try to get pregnant. A health care provider can also provide information on the most effective contraceptive methods. Pregnant women are urged to avoid travel to areas with known Zika transmission if at all possible. If travel is necessary, it is extremely important to take steps to prevent mosquito bites.

While there has been no local transmission of Zika virus in California to date, CDPH has confirmed 524 cases of travel-associated infections in the state. Florida and Texas have experienced locally transmitted cases of Zika.

People traveling to areas with known Zika transmission should take steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol for long-lasting protection. If using sunscreen and insect repellent, apply sunscreen first and then the repellent. Pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding should choose an EPA-registered insect repellent and use it according to the product label. Do not use insect repellent on infants less than two months of age.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use air conditioning or window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. If mosquitoes may come indoors, sleep under a bed net.
- Reduce the number of mosquitoes outside by emptying standing water from containers, such as flowerpots and buckets.

More information about Zika can be found in the [February 2017 CDPH Health and Travel Advisory](#), and on the [CDPH](#) website, which includes resources about [Zika and travel](#), [Zika and pregnancy](#), [Zika and sex](#), and [mosquito bite prevention](#). Additional information is also available on the [CDC](#) and [Mexico Ministry of Health](#) websites.

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