



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH
10 -16 GRENADA WAY
KINGSTON 5, JAMAICA.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection)

1. What is Zika Fever?

This is a mosquito-borne viral illness caused by the Zika virus (ZIKV).

2. How is ZIKV spread?

In Jamaica, *the Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the only mosquito that can spread this disease. If the mosquito bites someone who is infected with ZIKV, the mosquito becomes a carrier of the virus and infects any one it bites.

This mosquito which is commonly found in Jamaica also transmits the dengue and chikungunya viruses. There are other types of *Aedes* mosquitoes which can spread these viruses, but they are not found in Jamaica.

3. What are the habits of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito?

- The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito bites at any time during the day or night. It is found in and around homes, schools, workplaces, and other places where people gather.
- One infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is able to infect several persons.
- The mosquito breeds in any container where water is allowed to settle. The most common breeding sites are drums, tyres, flower pots and containers in and around homes, schools, workplaces and communities.
- The *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes produce on average 100 to 200 eggs per batch. Laid eggs can survive for very long periods in a dry state, often for more than a year.

- The life span of the adult mosquito is two (2) weeks to a month.

4. What are the symptoms of Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection)?

The most common symptoms of Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection) are:

- mild to severe fever
- rash (which may itch)
- redness of eyes
- joint pains
- headache
- myalgia (muscle pain)
- oedema (swelling) in lower limbs
- weakness

Persons may also experience:

- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- loss of appetite
- abdominal pain

Birth defects have been seen in some newborns whose mothers had Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection) in pregnancy. There are neurological (brain and nerve related) and autoimmune complications that have been noted as well.

5. How soon after being bitten by the infected mosquito will I experience symptoms?

Symptoms are usually experienced three (3) to twelve (12) days after being bitten by the infected mosquito. This is called the Incubation Period. Symptoms will usually last for two (2) to seven (7) days and are self-limiting.

6. Who is at risk for more severe symptoms?

- Infants
- The elderly
- Pregnant women
- Persons with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, heart diseases, hypertension and Sickle Cell Disease.

7. Have there been any deaths associated with Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection)?

Yes.

8. What is the treatment for Zila Fever (Zika Virus Infection)?

There is no specific medication for the treatment of Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection). Medication can be taken to reduce the fever, pain and other symptoms. However, only Paracetamol (Acetaminophen) should be used for pain and fever. DO NOT TAKE pain killers such as aspirin, ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatory drugs e.g. diclofenac. Check with your Doctor or Pharmacist to be sure!

Persons who think they have Zika Fever (Zika Virus infection) should:

- Take Paracetamol (Acetaminophen) for fever and pain
- Report to their Doctor or nearest Health Centre, if symptoms persist or become severe
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid mosquito bites

9. What can be done to reduce the risk of getting Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection)?

There is no vaccine to prevent Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection). The best prevention is to:

A. Reduce or eliminate mosquito breeding sites as follows:

- Check premises weekly for water-filled containers.
- Throw away or recycle water containers that are not needed.
- Containers such as drums should be fully and tightly covered, turned over or placed under a roof that does not allow them to fill with water.
- Clean and scrub flower vases and pet's water containers weekly and dump the water from overflow saucers under potted plants and flower pots.
- Clear roof gutters and eaves to prevent water from settling.
- Fill tree holes and other cavities in plants with soil or sand.
- Repair leaking pipes and outside faucets

B. Protect yourself from mosquito bites by:

- Using a mosquito repellent that contains DEET, IR3535 or Icaridin
- Sleeping under a mosquito net
- Wearing light coloured clothing and cover body as much as possible

10. Since there is no vaccine against ZIKV, what should I do if I travel to a country where there is an outbreak of Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection)?

- You should take the necessary measures to protect yourself from mosquito bites through the use of repellents or the use of appropriate clothes that minimize skin exposure.
- Avoid mosquito-infested areas.
- Seek medical attention if symptoms of dengue, chikungunya, and Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection) occur.

11. What actions are being taken by the Ministry of Health to address Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection)?

The Ministry has heightened its preparedness and response in the following areas:

- Surveillance
- Public Education
- Clinical Management
- Vector Control
- Laboratory Strengthening
- Training
- Social Mobilization
- Intersectoral Collaboration
- International Corporation
- Resource Mobilization

12. How can individuals/communities help prevent mosquito breeding?

Mosquito breeding prevention is everybody's business. You can do your part to prevent mosquito breeding by:

- organizing clean-up activities in your communities
- identifying, preventing or eliminating mosquito breeding sites
- reporting mosquito breeding sites that will require assistance from relevant authorities

13. Where can I get more information on Zika Fever (Zika Virus Infection) ?

You can get more information by calling:

- The Toll Free Line, 1-888- ONE LOVE (1-888-663-5683) or 633-7914
- Your Parish Health Department

You can also visit the Ministry of Health's website at: www.moh.gov.jm

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