

ZIKA VIRUS TRAVEL ADVISORY

Introduction

Zika virus disease is caused by RNA (ribonucleic acid) and it is transmitted in humans through a bite of *Aedes aegypti* mosquito which also carries dengue and yellow fever. In 1947, a group of scientists were working on yellow fever and by accident they discovered Zika virus in a monkey in Zika forest, Uganda, Africa. Scientific community believes that Zika is a cousin of an Indian dengue virus Chikungunya which spreads havoc during rainy season in North India. The first trace of Zika virus in India was reported in 1952-53 and hasn't been reported since.

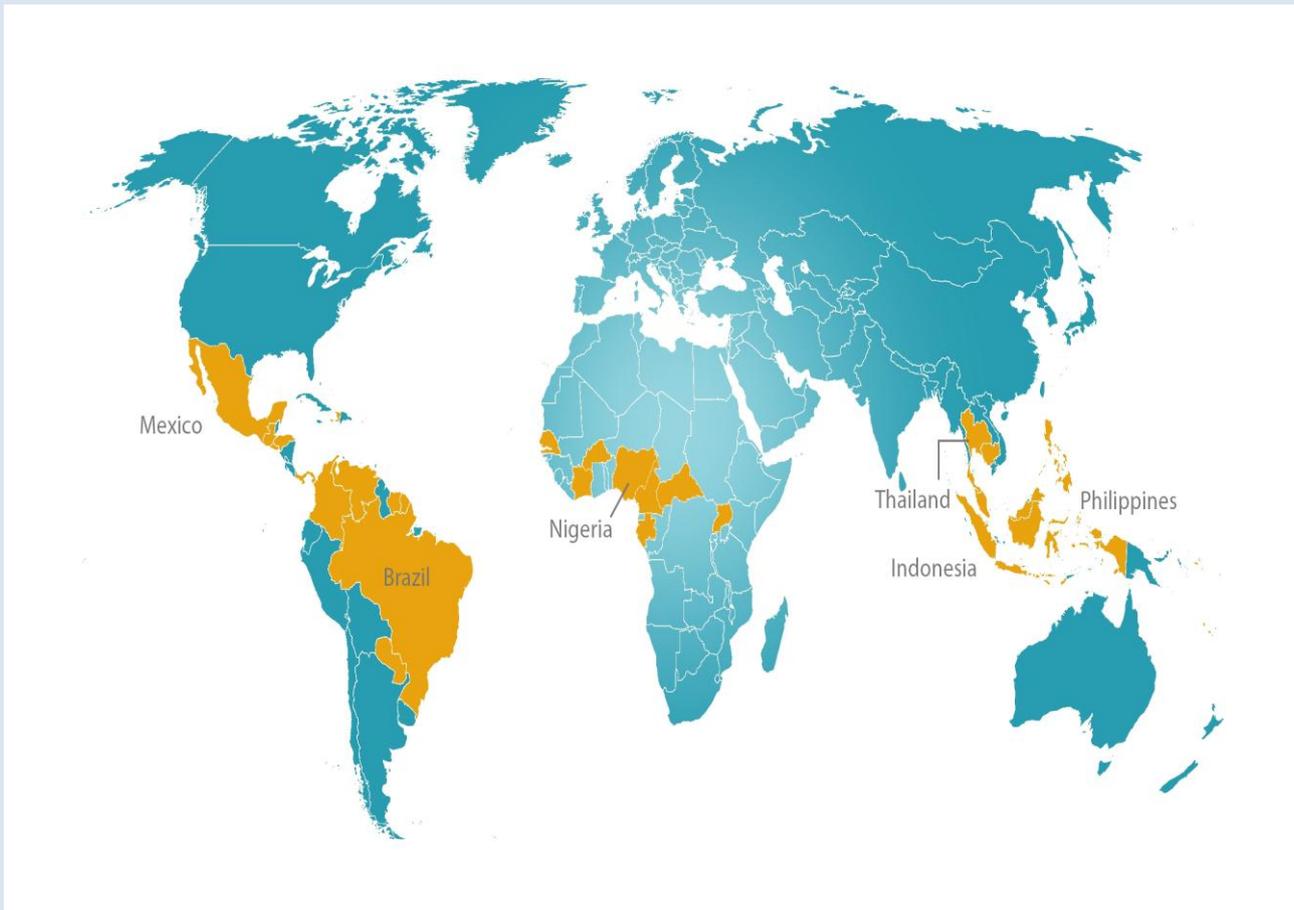


Zika virus



Aedes Aegypti Mosquito

Millions of individuals' in Brazil, USA, Cambodia, and other part of world¹ have been infected by it. According to WHO, the virus spreads through mother to their new born babies, may be sexually transmitted or may even spread through blood transfusion. This is the first time in history that this virus has shown neurological symptoms particularly in new born babies and it is also believed that globalization and climatic change may be the reason for the evolution and spread of this virus from Africa and South Asia to Western Hemisphere.



Zika virus infected Countries 2016

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of this disease is rash, fever, conjunctivitis and joint pain and the virus has generally been associated with mild symptoms lasting from several days to a week.

Treatment

According to healthcare specialist, no treatment or vaccine is presently available to prevent the outbreak and it can only be treated by precaution which are similar to dengue/ chikungunya:

1. Get plenty of rest and drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
2. Do not take aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID), like bupropfen or paracetamol and naproxen.

Travel advisory:

The current ongoing zika virus epidemic with widespread transmission in these following areas:

South America Countries

Barbados
Bolivia
Brazil
Colombia
Puerto Rico,
US territory
Costa Rica
Ecuador
El Salvador
French Guiana
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Martinique
Mexico
Nicaragua
Venezuela

Oceania/ Pacific Islands

American Samoa
Samoa
Tonga

Africa Countries

Cape Verde

The following preventive measures should be considered by travelers:

- All travelers need to take individual protective measures to prevent mosquito bites.
- Travelers having immune disorders or severe chronic illnesses should consult their healthcare advisor or seek advice from a travel clinic before travelling.
- Pregnant women who are want to become pregnant, and plan to travel to the areas experiencing zika infection should discuss their travel plans with their healthcare advisor and to consider postponing their travel to affected areas, especially to areas with widespread infection.

The following personal protection measures to avoid mosquito bites are as follows:

- Using mosquito repellents in accordance with the instructions indicated on the product label and not to use on children below three months of age.
- Wearing long sleeved shirts and long pants, especially during the peak hour of mosquito activity (morning and evening time).

- Using mosquito nets, whether they are impregnated or not, is essential if accommodation is not adequately screened or air conditioned.
- Travelers showing symptoms compatible with dengue, chikungunya or Zika virus disease within 2-10 days after returning from Zika virus affected area should consult their doctor.
- Pregnant women who have travelled to areas with Zika virus infection should mention their travel during parental visits in order to be assessed and monitored appropriately.

Indian Government Preventive Measures:

In the light of current threat, Government of India(Ministry of health and family welfare) has taken following measures:

Enhanced Surveillance :

1.1 Community Based Surveillance:

The Indian government started Integrated disease surveillance programme (IDSP) of which the main purpose is to monitor and gather data in both hospital and community to track clustering of acute febrile illness and seek cases, if any among those who travelled in infected region within 2 week preceding the onset of illness.

1.2 International Airports/ports:

The Ministry of civil aviation has issued guideline to all its International Airports/ ports to providing information to travelers on Zika virus disease and also report to immigration authorities if they are returning from affected areas and suffering from acute febrile illness. The airport/port health organization must have isolated facilities for emergency situation.

1.3 Rapid Response Team:

Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) shall be activated at Centre and State level and each team would comprise an epidemiologist/public health specialist, microbiologist and a medical/paediatric specialist and entomologist to travel at short notice to investigate outbreak in any part of country.

1.4 Laboratory Diagnosis:

The laboratory at NCDC, Delhi and National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, have the capacity to provide diagnosis of Zika virus disease in acute febrile stage. Now, government is planning to open new facilities in WB, UP, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, MP, Odisha, Assam, and Puducherry. It will be functional by the end of February 2016.

Awareness Programme:

The government issued a guideline to all states/UTs administration to increase their awareness among healthcare sector about zika virus and its possible link with adverse outcomes (fetal loss, microcephaly etc). And also provide preventive measures for source reduction of mosquito breeding – clean and cover container, water tank, flower pots or tyres where mosquitoes can breed. During outbreaks of virus, spraying of insecticides should be carried out as per National vector borne disease control guideline.

Co-operation with International agency:

National Council of Disease Control, New Delhi is continuously in touch with International Health Regulations (IHR) and WHO to seek/share information about affected countries and updates on ongoing epidemic.

Research and Monitoring:

Indian Council of Medical Research has been mandated to identify the research priorities and take appropriate action against outbreaks. The situation would be regularly monitored by the Health ministry and the guideline will be updated on daily basis.

¹Other countries where zika virus has been reported so far: Barbados, Bolivia, Columbia, Equador, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, St Martin, Suriname, Virgin Island and Venezuela.



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