

CDC issues Zika special travel considerations for 11 Southeast Asian countries

Today, CDC posted Zika virus-related special travel considerations for 11 Southeastern Asian countries. CDC now recommends that pregnant women should consider postponing nonessential travel to these countries because of the uncertain risk of Zika virus infection. CDC is issuing these special travel considerations so that travelers, especially pregnant women, can make informed decisions about their travel and their health.

The countries included in these considerations are Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste (East Timor), and Vietnam.

Zika virus has been present in areas of Southeast Asia for many years, and several countries have reported occasional cases or small outbreaks. Recent variations in the number of cases reported in the area have been observed. Zika virus is considered [endemic](#) in some of these countries, and many people who live there are likely immune. But US travelers to areas where Zika is endemic may not be immune to the virus and infections have occurred in travelers to Southeast Asia.

The level of risk for Zika virus infection in these countries is unknown, but it is likely lower (but not zero) than in areas where Zika is newly introduced and spreading widely. However, because Zika virus infection during pregnancy causes severe birth defects, including microcephaly and other severe brain abnormalities, pregnant women should talk to their healthcare provider and consider postponing nonessential travel to Southeast Asia. Zika virus testing should be offered to pregnant women and considered for other people who have symptoms of Zika virus disease if they have recently traveled to Southeast Asia.

Travelers to areas where Zika is actively spreading who have not already been infected with Zika virus can get it from mosquito bites. Mosquitoes that spread Zika bite during the day and night. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika virus. The best way to avoid Zika virus infection is to [prevent mosquito bites](#).

Some travelers to areas with Zika will become infected while traveling but will not become sick until they return home and they might not have any symptoms. To help stop the spread of Zika, travelers should use insect repellent for three weeks after travel to areas with Zika to prevent mosquito bites.

Some people who are infected do not have any symptoms. People who do have symptoms have reported fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. The sickness is usually mild with symptoms that last from several days to a week. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. Travelers to areas with Zika should look for [symptoms](#) or sickness after returning. If they become sick, they should tell their healthcare professional when and where they have traveled.

CDC has received reports of Zika virus being spread through sex with sick returning travelers. Until more is known, CDC recommends that pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant take the following precautions.

Pregnant women

- Should not travel to any area with a [Zika travel notice](#) and should consider postponing nonessential travel to the 11 countries in Southeast Asia listed in the newly issued considerations.
- If you must travel to or live in one of these areas, talk to your healthcare provider first and strictly follow [steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip](#).
- If you or your partner live in or travel to these areas, use condoms from start to finish every time you have sex or do not have sex during the pregnancy. Sex includes vaginal, anal, and oral sex.

Women trying to get pregnant

- Before you or your partner travel, talk to your healthcare provider about your plans to become pregnant and the risk of Zika virus infection.
- You and your partner should strictly follow [steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip](#).

For additional information on preventing the spread of Zika through sex, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/transmission/sexual-transmission.html>.