

Public Service Announcement

Take precautions against the Zika virus

Start Date: December 22, 2016 End Date: January 31, 2017

Nunavut-wide 60 sec

The Department of Health joins the Public Health Agency of Canada in recommending that pregnant Nunavummiut and those planning a pregnancy should not travel to Zika-affected areas: Caribbean, Central America, South America and one area of Miami, Florida.

The symptoms of Zika are usually mild in adults, but may include:

- fever
- sore muscles
- itching
- eye pain
- rash

Men and women can still pass the virus to their sexual partner even if they have no symptoms. Women, who are infected with the Zika virus during pregnancy, can pass the virus to their unborn baby. There can be very serious health consequences for the baby, including microcephaly (abnormally small head), other brain abnormalities and death.

For those who must travel while they or their partner are pregnant, the Department of Health recommends:

- Protecting yourself from mosquito bites by wearing light coloured long sleeve shirts and long pants to cover as much of the body as possible, day and night.
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, day and night.
- Sleeping in areas with window screens, or under a bed net.
- Using condoms while in the Zika-affected area and for the rest of the pregnancy

Men and women who travel to <u>Zika-affected areas</u> should practice safe sex and avoid pregnancy for six months after their return, even if they have no Zika virus symptoms.

Condoms and other family planning methods are available at all health centres in Nunavut. Speak with your health care provider as you plan your vacation for the most up-to-date information about countries affected by the Zika virus.

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