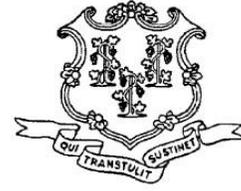


News



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With Zika Expected to Infect 1 in 5 Puerto Ricans, DPH Urges CT Travelers to Affected Areas to Take Precautions

HARTFORD – The State Department of Public Health (DPH) today reiterated warnings urging Connecticut residents, particularly pregnant women and women planning to become pregnant, to avoid travel to countries that have been affected by Zika virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Zika is expected to infect roughly 700,000 people on the island of Puerto Rico by the end of the year. With a large Puerto Rican community in Connecticut, and sizable populations from other Zika-affected countries ([see map](#)), coupled with daily flights to Puerto Rico and other countries from Bradley and airports in neighboring states, travelers should protect themselves from the virus by taking steps to prevent mosquito bites. When traveling to countries where Zika virus or other viruses spread by mosquitoes have been reported, use insect repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, and stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens.

“With no vaccine or antiviral drug currently available to prevent infection or protect a developing fetus, it is imperative that women in any trimester of pregnancy, women who are planning to become pregnant, and their male sexual partner follow recommendations for prevention,” said DPH Commissioner Dr. Raul Pino. “Women who are pregnant should not travel to areas with Zika. If you must travel to one of these areas, talk to your healthcare provider first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip. With hundreds of positive cases nationwide, I encourage residents to be vigilant. We at the state level are monitoring the situation with the utmost diligence.”

Zika virus is spread to people primarily through mosquito bites, though it can also spread from men to women through sexual transmission. While illness is usually mild, the possible link with birth defects and miscarriages makes prevention of infection among pregnant women essential. To avoid infections in pregnant women recommendations include: 1) postponing travel to areas where Zika virus is circulating among mosquitoes, 2) adopting precautions to avoid mosquito bites if travel is necessary, 3) men who travel to affected areas should abstain from sexual activity with a pregnant partner, or use condoms, for the duration of the pregnancy.

Earlier this week, Connecticut reported its first confirmed case of Zika in a pregnant woman, and yesterday, another case was confirmed for a non-pregnant woman in her 30s who had recently travelled to the state from the Caribbean. This week’s results brings to four the total number of Zika confirmed cases in Connecticut since March.

To date, 426 cases of travel-related Zika have been reported in the continental United States. Of those, 36 were pregnant women and eight were sexually transmitted. In Connecticut, 245 patients, including 217 pregnant women, have been tested for Zika virus.

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