



European Commission
Public health

Outbreak of Zika Virus Disease

Latest update of this page: 05.07.2016

Latest developments

29 June 2016 - Flash report - Audio conference of the HSC on Yellow Fever, Vaccine Shortages, Enterovirus Encephalitis and Zika Virus (29 June 2016)

24 June 2016 - Flash report from the meetings with the transport, tourism and health professionals sectors on the Zika virus disease on 20-21 June 2016 (20-21 June 2016)

20 May 2016 - ECDC Rapid Risk Assessment - Zika virus disease epidemic, sixth update

10 May 2016 - [ECDC risk assessment: Potential risks to public health related to communicable diseases at the Olympics and Paralympics Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2016](#)

[National Websites - Click to enlarge](#)

All recent developments

What is the Zika Virus?

Since May 2015, **Zika virus disease** – an emerging viral disease transmitted by Aedes mosquito bites - has been spreading in the Americas and the Caribbean, following the first cases reported in Brazil. The arrival of the virus has been associated with a steep increase in the birth of babies with abnormally small heads and in cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Based on a growing body of research, there is now a scientific consensus that Zika virus is the cause of microcephaly and Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). The magnitude of the risk that Zika virus infection during pregnancy will result in malformations in the foetus is under investigation, but remains unknown at present. As the spread of Zika virus disease continues in the American Region, the risk of Zika-infected travellers entering Europe increases. Imported cases of Zika virus infection have been reported in several European countries. However, at this stage, in the EU the virus has only been found in travellers returning from countries affected by the virus.

On **1 February 2016**, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the Zika Virus outbreak to be a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern**.

How is the Zika virus being managed in Europe?

During a health crisis, such as the Zika virus outbreak, whilst individual Member States are responsible for their own health measures, the Commission works closely with the WHO (which is responsible for the protection of health at international level), and in line with [Decision 1082/2013/EU on serious cross-border threats to health](#), supports EU governments in ensuring a coherent and well-coordinated response to cross-border health threats. The Decision lays down the responsibilities for risk assessment for the threats covered by its scope. As regards communicable diseases the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is in charge of providing risk assessment.

Watch the video for more information on **Crisis Management for health threats in the EU**



The video is available in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Italian](#), [Spanish](#), [Polish](#)

At the request of the Commission the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) carried out a risk assessment on Zika virus disease (latest update published on 11 April). According to the ECDC, the "risk of transmission of the Zika virus infection is extremely low in the EU" during the early spring as the climate conditions are not suitable to the mosquito which carries the virus. On the basis of the ECDC risk assessment, options for measures to control the infection and minimise the risk for travellers to affected countries are shared with health authorities in Member States.

Also in accordance with the Serious Cross-Border Health Threats Decision, the EU's Early Warning and Response System for medical emergencies has been activated, and the [Health Security Committee \(HSC\)](#), bringing together EU Member States and the Commission, meets regularly to coordinate Zika virus prevention and readiness (next meeting will take place in the near future).

Information to travellers and EU residents in affected areas



As part of their response, Member States may choose to use the **information to travellers and EU residents in affected areas Member States** presented in ECDC's Rapid Risk Assessments (RRAs).

You can find the latest RRAs here, on Zika virus disease epidemic and on Public health risks related to communicable diseases at the Rio de Janeiro Olympic and Paralympic Games, Brazil, 2016.

Scientific advice

- 20 May 2016 - ECDC Rapid Risk Assessment - Zika virus disease epidemic, sixth update
- 12 May 2016 - [ECDC risk assessment: Potential risks to public health related to communicable diseases at the Olympics and Paralympics Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2016](#)
- 23 February 2016 – ECDC publishes Rapid risk assessment: Zika virus disease epidemic: potential association with microcephaly and Guillain–Barré syndrome (Third update)
- 22 January 2016 - [ECDC publishes an Updated rapid risk assessment on Zika virus in the Americas and potential complications](#)

Official websites

European Union

- [ECDC - Zika virus infection](#)
- [ECDC - Zika outbreak in the Americas and the Pacific](#)
- [ECDC - Risk assessment](#)
- [ECDC - Epidemiological situation](#)
- [ECDC - Frequently Asked Questions on Zika](#)
- [ECDC - Countries and territories with local Zika transmission](#)
- [ECDC - Mosquito maps in the EU](#)

- [ECDC - media hotline](#)
- [ECDC - Twitter channels to report on the outbreak:](#)
 - corporate channel: [@ECDC_EU](#)
 - specific channel: [@ECDC_Outbreaks](#)
- [EU-funded research on Zika - DG Research and Innovation](#)

World Health Organization

- [WHO - Headquarters](#)
- [WHO - Pan American Health organization](#)
- [WHO Europe](#)

US CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Zika Virus in Central America](#)

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