

Louisiana Pharmacists Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Louisiana Pharmacists Association Educates Patients about the Zika Virus

On February 1, 2016, the World Health Organization declared Zika virus a public health emergency of international concern.ⁱ Zika is transmitted by mosquitos and sexual intercourse. It is associated with an increased incidence of microcephaly (profoundly reduced skull size) in children born to infected mothers.ⁱⁱ Louisiana is home to the mosquitos that can carry the virus.^{iv}

Four out of five people infected with the Zika virus never know they have it. The rarely experienced symptoms are usually mild and may include fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes).ⁱⁱ Zika usually remains in the blood for about a week, though it may remain in semen longer.ⁱⁱ Because it is unknown how long viable virus may remain in semen, men who may have been exposed to the Zika virus and have pregnant partners should “consistently and correctly use condoms during sex (i.e., vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, or fellatio) or abstain from sex for the duration of the pregnancy.”ⁱⁱⁱ Preliminary data suggest that infection of a pregnant mother with the Zika virus is correlated with microcephaly in her baby.ⁱ **Babies with microcephaly have smaller brains that may not develop properly.**ⁱⁱ

As of March 30, 2016 there have been 312 reported cases of Zika virus in the US, including 74 in Florida, 27 in Texas, and 2 in Louisiana.ⁱⁱ There has been no local transmission of Zika virus in Louisiana to-date.^{iv} While all of the current cases in this country have arisen as a result of people traveling from infected areas outside of the country, the disease remains of high concern because the mosquitos that transmit it – the *Aedes* species – are common in Louisiana. Zika also remains of high concern because the consequences to the children of pregnant mothers who get bitten are potentially devastating.

There is currently no vaccination for Zika. A pregnant woman may not know she’s been infected until an affected child is born. The best methods to combat the spread of infection – if it does become a local risk – are to avoid mosquito bites. Some good strategies to keep in mind are these:

- Reduce sources of standing water where possible (buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower vases).
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when tolerable.
- Stay in places with air conditioning or that use window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Mosquitoes that spread Zika hunt mostly during the day, into the early evening.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents. When used as directed, these repellents are proven safe and effective, even for pregnant and breast-feeding women. You can ask your pharmacist to help you read the labels and understand the warnings.
 - Always follow the product label instructions; reapply as directed
 - Apply sunscreen *before* applying insect repellent.
- Common mosquito repellent ingredients include:
 - **DEET**: slightly toxic*; intended for spare, infrequent use; coverage up to 12 hours**
 - **IR 3535**: use on body; coverage up to 8 hours
 - **Oil of Citronella**: use on body or in environment with candles, etc.; coverage up to 2.5 hours
 - **Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (3-menthane-3,8-diol)*****: use on body or clothing; coverage up to 6 hours
 - **Permethrin**: use on clothing ONLY; do NOT use permethrin products directly on skin
 - **Picaridin**: slightly toxic; use on body; coverage up to 12 hours
 - **Catnip Oil**: coverage up to 15 hours

*when used according to directions, the EPA does not anticipate any adverse health events with the insect repellents classified as ‘slightly toxic.’^v

** The protection times listed are published by the EPA. Many products vary, so followed the link cited in this article for information on specific products.^{vi}

*** A recent study found that Lemon Eucalyptus Oil is as effective a repellent as Deet.^{vii}

The Louisiana Pharmacists Association, established in 1882, strives to promote the interests of all pharmacists of the State of Louisiana. For more information about the LPA and its benefits, contact Julie Fuselier or Phyllis Perron, LPA Co-Executive Directors at 225/346-6883 or visit our website at www.louisianapharmacists.com.

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ⁱ World Health Organization Zika Virus Fact Sheet, March 18, 2016 Update. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control Zika Virus (accessed March 23, 2016) <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ **Update: Interim Guidance for Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus. CDC MMWR. March 25, 2016.**
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6512e3.htm>

^{iv} Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals “Key Messages – Zika Virus Disease” March 2, 2016.

http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/assets/oph/Center-PHCH/Center-CH/infectious-epi/PublicInfo/ZikaKeyMessages_3-2-16.PDF

^v Environmental Protection Agency DEET fact sheet.

https://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem_search/reg_actions/reregistration/fs_PC-080301_1-Apr-98.pdf. Accessed March 31, 2016.

^{vi} Environmental Protection Agency Repellent Comparison Sheet.

https://cfpub.epa.gov/opref/insect_s/pdf_results.cfm?productname=&company=&export=false&ingredient=®istration=&hidselected=&rangetime= Accessed March 31, 2016.

^{vii} **Rodriguez SD, Drake LL, Price DP, Hammond JJ, Hansen IA. “The Efficacy of Some Commercially Available Insect Repellents for *Aedes aegypti* (Diptera: Culicidae) and *Aedes albopictus* (Diptera: Culicidae)” *J Insect Sci.* 2015 Oct;15:140.**
<http://j.insectscience.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/1/140>

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