



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS



**NEW MEXICO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**HEALTH**

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THE BITE!**

# IMPORTANT FACTS

## ◆ WHAT IS ZIKA VIRUS?

Zika is a viral disease transmitted from mosquitoes to humans that can cause severe birth defects when women get infected during pregnancy. There are only two mosquito species in the United States that are known to be able to transmit the Zika virus (*Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*). These mosquitoes live near people (inside or close to our homes) and typically bite during the daytime, but can also bite at night.

## ◆ HOW ZIKA VIRUS SPREADS

A mosquito becomes infected after biting a person already infected with Zika virus during their first week of illness. That mosquito can then spread the virus to other people.

Zika virus can also be spread during unprotected sex with an infected man, from a mother to her fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth, and, likely though not confirmed, via a blood transfusion.

## ◆ WHAT ARE THE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF ZIKA VIRUS?

Most people infected with Zika virus (4 out of 5) won't have symptoms at all or will only have mild symptoms. The most common signs and symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain or red eyes. People may also experience muscle pain and headaches.

Usually people get sick within a week of being bitten by an infected mosquito. Infected people are usually better within a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and death is rare. Once a person has been infected with Zika virus, they are most likely protected from future infections.

## ◆ WHEN IS ZIKA VIRUS INFECTION OF GREATEST CONCERN?

Zika virus infection during pregnancy has been shown to cause a birth defect of the brain called microcephaly (abnormally small head size) as well as other birth defects including eye defects, hearing deficits, and impaired growth. There have also been reports of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare but serious disorder of the nervous system that can cause paralysis after an infection with Zika virus.

## ◆ ARE THERE OTHER MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES I SHOULD WORRY ABOUT?

Yes, in areas where Zika virus is found there may be other mosquito-borne diseases caused by dengue virus, chikungunya virus or West Nile virus.

## ◆ IS THERE A TREATMENT FOR ZIKA VIRUS INFECTION?

There is no specific medication to treat and no vaccine to prevent Zika virus infection. Since Zika virus infections are not caused by bacteria, antibiotics will not work. Instead, healthcare providers may prescribe rest, fluids, and medications to alleviate symptoms. Most people recover from this illness on their own. If you think you may have Zika virus infection, don't take medications that contain aspirin or any of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen which can cause dangerous bleeding if you are actually infected with dengue virus instead. Illnesses caused by dengue virus and Zika virus are similar and can only be differentiated by laboratory testing.

## ◆ WHO SHOULD GET TESTED FOR ZIKA VIRUS INFECTION?

All pregnant women returning from an area with Zika virus transmission should consult with their medical provider about getting tested for Zika virus, even in the absence of symptoms or recollection of having been bitten by mosquitoes. Testing is available for pregnant women returning from any area with active Zika virus transmission 2 to 12 weeks after their return.

Anyone who develops an illness consistent with Zika virus infection and has travelled to or has lived in an area with Zika virus transmission within two weeks of illness onset should also be tested.

For a list of areas affected by Zika virus please visit:  
<http://cdc.gov/zika>.

For more information on Zika visit our website at  
[www.nmhealth.org](http://www.nmhealth.org) or call (505) 827-0006.

# PROTECT YOUR HOME, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOURSELF

MOSQUITOES THAT TRANSMIT ZIKA VIRUS STAY CLOSE TO PEOPLE'S HOMES  
AND CAN BREED IN VERY SMALL CONTAINERS WITH STANDING WATER

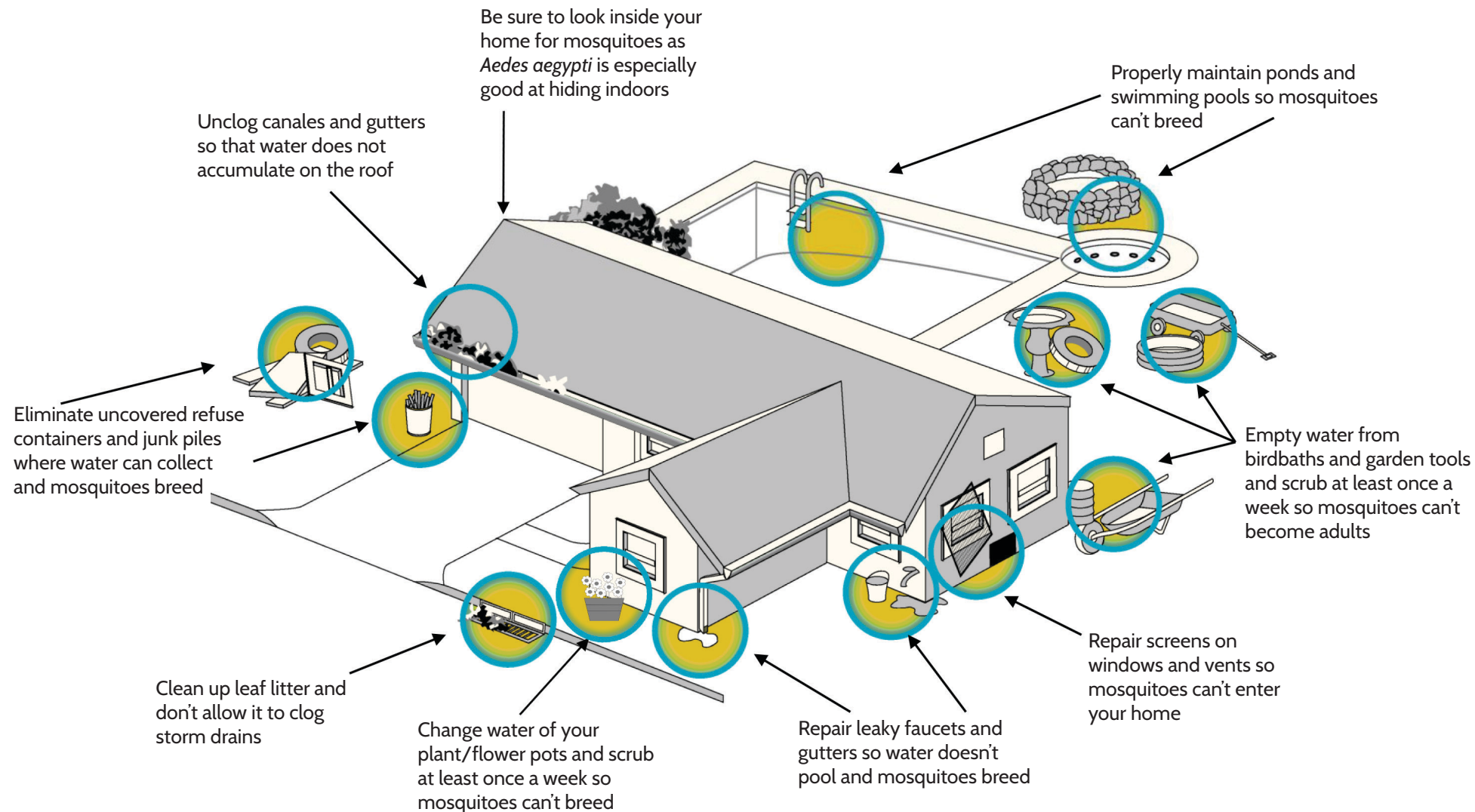


Image created by the New York State Department of Health

## Sick with ZIKA virus?

Protect yourself and others  
from mosquito bites



**21 DAYS**

To help prevent your family and neighbors from getting sick, strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the first week of illness. People returning to the United States from an area with Zika virus should strictly follow steps to avoid mosquito bites for 3 weeks, even if they never got sick.

These steps can help prevent people with Zika virus from passing it to mosquitoes that could spread it to other people:

- ◆ Stay indoors as much as possible and make sure mosquitoes cannot enter your home.
- ◆ Wear long pants and long sleeves and apply insect repellent (following label instructions) when outside.
- ◆ Please call the New Mexico Department of Health at 505-827-0006 to report any illness that could be Zika.