



Zika Facts from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Released 2-4-16

The fact is that there are still many questions to be answered when it comes to Zika virus and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is working closely with CDC and other states to get information to help answer these questions and share accurate information as it becomes available. In order to help keep you informed, there is now a dedicated Zika virus web page on the DPH web site, available here:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/epidemiology/providers/mosquito/zika-virus.html>

or easily accessed from the main DPH web page at www.mass.gov/dph. There is a Zika virus fact sheet available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, the most recent guidance to providers from DPH and a link to the CDC website.

The kinds of mosquitoes that are known to carry Zika virus are generally not found in Massachusetts and we do not expect there to be risk from mosquitoes here. However, travelers to affected areas may be bitten by infected mosquitoes during their trip and some of them are being diagnosed with Zika virus disease when they return to the United States. Zika virus infection is reportable and we will contact the local board of health if a resident in their jurisdiction tests positive for the virus.

History of Zika: This virus was identified in 1947 in Africa and was found only in Africa and Southeast Asia until 2007. Since then it has spread through French Polynesia and then most recently to the Americas. The reason Zika has caused so much concern, is that in pregnant women who become infected with Zika virus, it is possible for the virus to spread to the baby. There is concern that when this happens, it can sometimes result in a birth defect that causes abnormal brain and head development (microcephaly). This concern has resulted in recommendations for pregnant women to postpone travel to areas with Zika transmission, for testing of pregnant women with recent travel to affected areas and symptoms consistent with Zika virus infection, for regular monitoring of the fetus with ultrasound in pregnant women that traveled to affected areas, and likely more recommendations to come.

For information specific to where you live or work, contact your local public health office. Tri-Town Public Health Contact Information:

Boxford: www.boxford.ma.us phone: 978-887-6000 x507; email: klongo@town.boxford.ma.us

Middleton: www.townofmiddleton.org phone: 978-777-1869; email: healthdirector@townofmiddleton.org

Topsfield: www.topsfield-ma.gov phone: 978-887-1520; email: j.coulon@topsfield-ma.gov

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