

ZIKA VIRUS AND SEX



INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS TO ZIKA-AFFECTED COUNTRIES OR AREAS AND THEIR PARTNERS



- ✓ Follow mosquito bite prevention measures and practice safe sex when travelling.
- ✓ Always use **condoms correctly** or **avoid sex** to protect yourself and others, as the virus can stay in semen for **up to 6 months** and in vaginal fluids for **at least 2 months**.



TRAVELLED RECENTLY? KNOW THAT...

- Zika can spread through the bite of an **infected mosquito** or through **sexual contact**, including vaginal, anal, and oral sex as well as the sharing of sex toys with an infected man or woman.
- Most infected people will only have mild symptoms, if they have any symptoms at all.
- You can spread Zika before symptoms appear, while you have symptoms, and after symptoms have resolved.

WHO SHOULD BE CONCERNED?

Pregnant women and couples:

- Zika can be passed from a pregnant woman to a developing fetus.
- The health risks are greatest for babies born to women infected during pregnancy, as the virus is known to cause severe birth defects.
- To prevent infection, use condoms correctly or avoid sex, for the duration of the pregnancy.

Couples planning a pregnancy:

- **Women** should **wait at least 2 months** after travel before trying to conceive. This will ensure that any possible Zika virus infection has cleared the body.
- **Men** should **wait 6 months** before trying for a pregnancy because the virus has been found in the semen of some infected men for up to 6 months.

During that time, men should:

- ✓ always use condoms correctly; or
- ✓ avoid having sex.

Talk to your healthcare provider if you have travelled to a Zika-affected country or area and are concerned about possible infection.



For more information visit: Canada.ca/zika-virus