



THE HEALING PLACE

Health Ministry Team

"wholeness of body, mind and spirit"

Spiritual Leaders

Father Joyle Martinez
Father Felipe Paraguya

Chair

Clara Heimericks, RN

Members

Grace Bati, RN
Paz Cajucom, RN
Dana Dinh, RN
Carmela Encina, RN
Romy Encina, RN
Norv Latreille
Lottie Munsayac, RN
Judy Niedzwiedz
Monica Parker, LVN
Bernie Silla, RN
Mary Uwhuba, RN

Regular Meetings

Second Wednesday of every other month, 6:30 pm
Religious Education Bldg, Rm #3 Call any member for more information

Membership

You need not be a medical professional. If you are interested in the Health Ministry please call Clara Heimericks at 916-689-3932 or the rectory at 916-381-5200.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ZIKA VIRUS

We've been hearing a lot about the Zika virus lately. And, as with any "new" information about health issues, there's been a flurry of press activity that can spark fear.

This is especially true about the reported link between the virus and microcephaly, *(a condition where a baby's head is much smaller than expected. During pregnancy, a baby's head grows because the baby's brain grows. Microcephaly can occur because a baby's brain has not developed properly during pregnancy or has stopped growing after birth, which results in a smaller head size.)*

So let's take a few minutes to review what we do and don't know about Zika.

Where Did it Start?

Zika virus was first discovered in 1947 and is named after the Zika forest in Uganda. For years the Zika virus was mainly seen in equatorial regions of Africa and Asia where it caused a mild, flu-like illness and rash in some people.

About 10 years ago Zika outbreaks were reported in the Pacific Islands.

Then, last spring it popped up in South America where it has infected more than 1 million Brazilians.



How is it Spread?

The Zika virus infection can be spread by the bite of the yellow fever mosquitoes and it's now suggested that it can be spread by Asian tiger and other mosquitoes as well. A recent National Institutes of Health (NIH) study suggests that these mosquitoes have a wide and expanding global distribution, including in the United States.

Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for about a week but it can be found longer in some people. When the mosquito bites a person already infected with the virus they then spread the virus to the next person they bite. Many people who are infected have no symptoms so they may not be aware they carry the virus, and thus the risk of infection can be high.

There has also been some concern expressed about the spread of the virus through blood products.

There are now a number of reported cases of the Zika virus being found in semen, where it can last longer than in blood, and there is speculation that the virus may be spread through sexual contact.

How Does the Virus Spread to the U.S.?

Today's travel and commerce are ideal conduits for spreading virus and disease throughout the world.

- ▶ People who have traveled to an area where the Zika virus is present and been infected, and returned to the U.S., may carry the live virus in their blood or semen for a week or longer.
- ▶ People who are in contact with others who have returned from travel to an infected area may be infected by mosquito bite or possibly by sexual contact.
- ▶ The CDC currently lists Puerto Rico, Mexico, and 20 countries in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands and Africa as areas infected with the virus. This list changes frequently—you can check it at <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- ▶ Recent studies show that the mosquitoes suggested as capable of carrying the Zika virus have been found in the U.S.
- ▶ NIH studies have determined that more than 60 percent of the U.S. population lives in areas in which the relevant mosquitoes can survive.

What Are the Symptoms?

Not everyone infected with the virus has symptoms, but when present, symptoms are mild and last less than a week. They include fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes.

There have been cases of Guillain-Barre syndrome reported in patients following suspected Zika virus infection.

There have been many cases of microcephaly reported following outbreaks of the Zika virus.

How Can I Protect Myself?

With no vaccine or treatment currently available the best way for people—and pregnant women in particular—to protect themselves is to avoid traveling to places where the Zika virus is known to be spreading. If you must, however, then protect yourself from mosquito bites and sexual contact with others who may be infected.

If symptoms occur, focus on relieving them with rest, rehydration, and acetaminophen for fever and pain and report your symptoms to your medical provider.

Aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen should be avoided.

The Zika Virus and Microcephaly

Brazilian health authorities made the initial connection between the Zika virus and microcephaly primarily because the increase in microcephaly seemed to emerge a few months after the introduction of the virus in Brazil. Thousands of cases have now been reported and the Brazilian health ministry has confirmed the presence of Zika virus in tissue samples and amniotic fluid collected from a small number of affected children or their mothers.

The Centers for Disease Control, CDC, recommends that women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus has spread. Because this information may change frequently, you may wish to check the CDC website before traveling. <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Sources: CDC, NIH

Upcoming Health Ministry Events and Activities:

Apr 3, 2016—FREE BPS clinic in the parish hall 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

May 1, 2016—FREE BPS clinic in the parish hall 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

May 14, 2016—Safety and Crime Prevention Workshop 2:00 p.m. Location TBD