



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
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Commissioner

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AS SUMMER TRAVEL BEGINS, HEALTH DEPARTMENT REMINDS NEW YORKERS ABOUT THE RISK OF TRAVELING TO AREAS WITH ZIKA VIRUS

To date, over 400 pregnant women in New York City have tested positive for Zika; 32 of their infants have birth defects consistent with Zika or tested positive for the infection

All cases are travel associated; no local transmission of Zika has occurred in New York City

Health Department launches new citywide Zika awareness campaign

May 25, 2017 – As summer travel season begins, the Health Department urges women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, along with their sexual partners to avoid travel to areas with Zika virus. There is still ongoing transmission of Zika in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America and South America. While Zika is not currently circulating in Miami-Dade County (FL) and Brownsville (TX), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a travel warning to these areas because transmission has occurred before. New Yorkers returning from Zika-affected areas should use condoms for all sexual activity to prevent transmission. Men should use a condom for at least six months. Women should avoid becoming pregnant for two months. In addition, pregnant women or women planning pregnancy should not have unprotected sex with a partner who has traveled to a Zika-affected country in the preceding six months.



As of this week, 1,067 New Yorkers tested positive for Zika virus disease, including 402 pregnant women, and all of the cases were associated with travel. Of these travel-associated cases, 11 were transmitted sexually by a partner who traveled. To date, 32 infants have been born with birth defects consistent with Zika virus and/or tested positive for the virus. To renew awareness about the dangers of Zika, the Health Department is launching a citywide campaign, which will be on television, social media and in newspapers. The campaign cautions New Yorkers to avoid travel to areas where the virus is circulating while pregnant or if planning to become pregnant. The

television ad can be seen [here](#). If travel to areas with Zika virus activity cannot be avoided, women should take precautions to prevent pregnancy and minimize potential Zika virus exposure by using condoms and avoiding mosquito exposure.

"As the summer season begins, this administration is committed to ensuring that all New Yorkers traveling to Zika-affected areas are taking preventive measures," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "While we did not see any locally acquired cases of Zika last summer, we did see several hundred cases transmitted through travel in locations where the virus is still very prevalent. It is critical that New Yorkers who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, along with their sexual partners, do not travel to Zika-affected areas."

"Last year, the City took unprecedented action to raise awareness and reach out to communities about the risks of traveling to areas with Zika transmission," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "This season, our campaign and awareness efforts are shaped by what we learned over the past year. Although local transmission of the Zika virus remains unlikely, the virus continues to circulate in Latin America and the Caribbean islands. We urge women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, along with their sexual partners, to avoid traveling to these areas."



Last year, no mosquitoes tested positive for the Zika virus in New York City throughout the mosquito season, and all human cases of Zika infection were associated with travel to affected areas. Based on last year's extensive mosquito surveillance, the Health Department does not expect local Zika transmission. Nevertheless, the agency will continue to monitor mosquito populations across the five boroughs, especially the populations which commonly carry mosquito-borne illnesses such as the West Nile virus. Mosquito control measures include larviciding (killing larvae) and adulticiding (killing flying adults).

Last year, the Health Department developed and implemented a comprehensive emergency response plan to protect New Yorkers from the Zika virus. The Zika

Action Plan allowed the City to quickly test New Yorkers returning from Zika-affected areas, increase mosquito control efforts to assess and reduce the likelihood of local transmission, and educate New Yorkers about the risk associated with the virus. This year, the Department remains committed to continuing these efforts. With the risk of local transmission being exceedingly low, mosquito control around Zika will focus primarily on surveillance, and will be augmented based on need. The Department will continue its aggressive West Nile mosquito control operation.

"Just because a health threat is no longer in the news, it isn't any less dangerous," said **Council Member Corey Johnson, Chair of the Health Committee**. "Reminding New Yorkers who travel during the summer months that certain precautions need to be taken to avoid the Zika virus is every bit as important now as it was last year. I want to applaud Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett for ensuring that our city is aware of ongoing, as well as new, health issues."

"The Health Department's ongoing, proactive outreach warning New Yorkers about the Zika virus is proving effective, but Zika continues to pose a very real threat to the health of women who are or may become pregnant. They and their male partners should try to avoid traveling to areas where Zika transmission has occurred, or follow safe sex practices for several months after returning from a Zika-affected area," said **Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried of Manhattan, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Health**.

"We can't lose sight that Zika still exists in NYC and other places around the world. It is only right that our City does its part in helping to prevent further transmission of the disease," said **Council Member Rafael Salamanca**. "With so many traveling to Zika-prone areas like Puerto Rico to visit family and friends or to vacation before returning to New York, we all need to do our part to raise awareness, and prevent future hardships."

"I applaud the continuing efforts of our City's Department of Health as it launches this new public health campaign to remind women across our City about the dangers of the Zika virus," said **State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. "With the start of the summer season, I join them in urging all women who are pregnant or are planning to become pregnant to avoid traveling to Zika-affected areas, and in that way, protect their health."

New Yorkers should check the [CDC website](#) to learn if they are visiting an area with active Zika virus transmission. Any pregnant woman who traveled to an area with Zika virus transmission while pregnant or trying to become pregnant should see her doctor and be tested for the virus.

To find free NYC Condoms, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/condoms. To learn more about condom use and sexual health or to download the free NYC Condom Finder app, please visit facebook.com/NYCcondom.

To learn more about the City's Zika travel warning and steps to prevent Zika infection, go to nyc.gov/health/zika.

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