



1. What is the Zika Virus?

The recent Zika virus outbreak is rapidly spreading to a number of countries. The virus was first discovered in 1947 in Uganda. The first document outbreak was detected in 2007 in Micronesia. Much more information has been learned about possible complications of Zika virus infection during investigations of more recent outbreaks. In 2015, health agencies in Brazil noticed an unusual increase of babies born with microcephaly during the Zika outbreak in that country. This has been also observed in other countries similarly affected. The causal link between this condition and the Zika virus is still being researched.

2. What are the symptoms?

In most instances symptomatic disease is not severe and only 1 in 5 will show symptoms. These appear a few days after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito and can be manifested by a low grade fever, rash, and muscle and joint pain. Symptoms typically last a week.

3. How is it transmitted?

The virus is transmitted from the female Aedes mosquitos. Transmission is in a similar fashion as dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever.

4. What should healthcare professionals do to protect themselves and patients? (It's a big fat DUH..... but we need to answer it anyway)

The latest information suggests that active Zika virus is present in blood, urine, and saliva of infected people. Health care professional who treat individuals suffering from Zika are advised to maintain use of standard precautions during patient care.

