



SHELBY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE FIRST CASE OF ZIKA VIRUS

MEMPHIS -- The Shelby County Health Department (SCHD) has received confirmation of the first case of Zika virus disease in Shelby County, an individual who traveled to one of the affected areas.

“The Shelby County Health Department continues to work collaboratively with the Tennessee Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify cases and educate our community,” said Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.

At this time, Zika cases in Shelby County are the result of travelers returning from countries where Zika is prevalent. As the mosquito that can carry Zika becomes more prevalent in Shelby County this summer, it will be essential for Shelby County citizens to take the appropriate precautions to reduce their risk of mosquito bite and possible transmission of Zika.

“With the rising number of cases around the country, the department has been preparing for the possibility of a Zika virus case in our community,” said Alisa Haushalter, DNP, RN, director of the Shelby County Health Department.

Except in pregnant women, Zika virus is almost always a very mild illness and for most people testing is not necessary. Approximately 80 percent of those infected never show symptoms of the disease while approximately 20 percent show only mild symptoms. There is no vaccine to prevent infection and no specific antiviral treatment for Zika virus infection. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes.

Pregnant women can be infected with Zika virus in any trimester, and there have been increased cases of microcephaly possibly associated with Zika virus infections. Microcephaly is a condition where the head is smaller than normal and may lead to a child experiencing a variety of other health challenges including physical and speech functions, seizure, hyperactivity, coordination problems and other brain/neurological disorders. SCHD advises women who are pregnant or of childbearing age to especially understand the risk of contracting Zika virus disease.

SCHD recommends the following for travelers to protect themselves against mosquitoes:

- Apply repellants to skin often; these can include lotions, liquids or sprays. SCHD recommends the use of repellants which contain DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane 3,8-diol and IR3535.
- Wear long, loose and light-colored shirts and pants and wear socks. Tucking shirts in pants and tucking pants into socks will help form a barrier. Wear closed shoes or boots instead of sandals.

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- In remote locations lacking window screens and/or air conditioning, the use of bed nets is advised. These should reach the floor or be tucked under the mattress.
- Avoid perfumes, colognes and products with fragrances that might attract mosquitoes.

To request an SCHED staff member to speak to an organization and answer questions, email Elizabeth.Hart@shelbycountyttn.gov or call (901) 222-9607. The list of affected areas includes many countries in the Caribbean and South and Central America. The list changes frequently; to see the most current list, go to www.cdc.gov/zika/.

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