



Joint Release

Feb. 29, 2016

SRHD Media Contact: Kim Papich
kpapich@srhd.org | (509) 324-1539, c (509) 994-8968

DOH Media Contact: Julie Graham
julie.graham@doh.wa.gov | 360-236-4078

***Zika Virus Case Confirmed in Spokane County,
U.S. Citizen Diagnosed in County***
*Identified in pregnant woman, baby tests negative for Zika virus at birth;
no transmission risk to local residents*

SPOKANE, Wash. – Spokane Regional Health District officials, working with Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed Zika virus infection in a U.S. citizen diagnosed in Spokane County, Washington. The individual is female, in her 20s, and was in an area where Zika transmission is happening. The woman was pregnant at the time she had symptoms of Zika virus infection. She delivered her baby and the child tested negative for Zika virus. The baby shows no signs of the health problems linked to Zika virus infection.

“Although we can be thankful that mom is symptom-free at this point, and that her baby appears unaffected at this time, this serves as a timely reminder for anyone considering traveling to countries where the virus is circulating to be aware of the risks, and for pregnant women to delay their travel if possible,” said Dr. Joel McCullough, SRHD interim health officer.

Zika virus can be spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus. The risk factors and frequency for adverse health effects to the baby are still being studied, including microcephaly (abnormally small heads) in infants, and miscarriage. CDC experts still do not know if there is a link between Zika virus and Guillain-Barré syndrome, a rare immune disorder that most people recover from.

This is the second confirmed case of Zika virus infection in a returning traveler to Washington state. The first was in a Mason County, Washington male who recently traveled to a Zika affected area. The Spokane woman was tested based on CDC guidance that all pregnant women who traveled to a place with a Zika outbreak during pregnancy receive antibody testing for the virus.

<more>

As knowledge of the link between Zika and birth defects evolves, CDC recommends special precautions for pregnant women. In any trimester, they should consider postponing travel to [areas where Zika virus](#) is spreading. If a pregnant woman must travel to one of these areas, she is encouraged to talk to her health care provider first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.

To date, 107 travel-associated Zika virus cases have been reported nationally. The specific mosquito species known to transmit the virus is not found in northern states, nor are there any confirmed cases of non-travel acquired, mosquito-borne cases in the U.S.

Nearly 80 percent of people infected with the virus will have no symptoms. Most others typically have mild symptoms, such as fever, joint soreness, rash or red eyes. There are no vaccines or treatment for Zika virus.

Only pregnant women or individuals planning a pregnancy are encouraged to delay their travel if possible. Otherwise, health officials urge anyone considering travel to countries where the virus is circulating to be aware of the need to protect themselves and others from mosquito bites. Individuals returning to the U.S. from Zika-affected areas who are pregnant or having symptoms of Zika illness should contact their health care provider. Men returning from an area with Zika who have a pregnant partner, or who have a partner whose pregnancy status may not yet be known, should use a condom during sex or not have sex during pregnancy.

Zika virus has been found for years in parts of Asia and Africa. It then migrated into the Western Hemisphere in May 2015, and the virus has now spread throughout tropical areas of Central and South America and many countries in the Caribbean.

SRHD officials recommend travelers further protect themselves against mosquito bites by:

- Applying EPA-registered insect repellants to skin following label instructions for all-day protection.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants and closed shoes or boots instead of sandals.
- Using bed nets in locations lacking window screens and/or air conditioning. These should reach the floor or be tucked under the mattress.
- Avoiding perfumes, colognes and products with fragrances that might attract mosquitoes.
- Using clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear that contain permethrin. Permethrin-treated clothing repels and kills mosquitoes and other pests and retains this effect after repeated washing. Some clothing is available pretreated with permethrin; Permethrin should not be used directly on skin.

<more>

While public health and medical professionals are very familiar with many mosquito-borne diseases, there is still much that is being actively studied about Zika virus disease, including its transmission through sex, blood and other avenues. For updates and other resources specific to Zika visit [SRHD's site](#), [DOH's site](#) or [CDC's site](#). Spokane Regional Health District's web site also offers comprehensive, updated information about Spokane Regional Health District and its triumphs in making Spokane a safer and healthier community. Become a fan of SRHD on [Facebook](#) to receive local safety and wellness tips. You can also follow us on Twitter [@spokanehealth](#).

###