

Zika Virus Q&A

[VIDEO TRANSCRIPT]

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Hi, I'm Betsy Todd, political editor at the American Journal of Nursing and nurse epidemiologist. We are here today to answer your questions about Zika. So what's the first question?

[Text] What are some preventative measures for Zika?

They really are very basic but very effective. Screens and air conditioners are two biggie's. So keeping your household more free from mosquitoes by using screens or AC is really good. And bed nets are important. Now in the U.S. we're not so worried about bed netting if people are sleeping inside where there are screens but if you're camping or when you traveling with your babies and you have a stroller or a baby carriage or whatever you should have a mosquito net over the baby's carriage. The second thing besides those structural things is to eliminate standing water and this is really a biggie that we don't tend to think about much in this country because we don't worry about mosquitoes so much. That means standing water both inside and outside the house. So if you have vases for example inside and you're not good about changing the water in them then that's, you have to start getting good at it. Also there are tablets that kill larvae which is what we're worried about in standing water and so if there's standing water that for some reason cannot be eliminated where you live then the use of those little barbicide tablets are really very helpful. They are not however for your drinking water. You're not supposed to do this to water that you or your pets intend to drink so just really concentrate on changing water like pet bowls or bird baths or things like that as often as you can. Personal protection of course where if you're going to be in a real mosquito area you should wear long sleeves. It's uncomfortable but it's a good idea if you're trying to prevent mosquito bites. Insect repellent of course is really important but you have to know how to use it and use it correctly so be sure you follow directions. Remember that there are no insect repellents that

are approved to use on babies less than two month old and some repellents you can't use on little kids under three. So again read the label to be sure you know what you're using. If you do have babies or children that you're going to apply repellent to, spray it on your hands first and then put it on the baby or the child. Don't try to be spraying and getting spray in their mouth or eyes or whatever. If you are going outside and you're going to be wearing sunscreen and mosquito repellent, wear your sunscreen, put the sunscreen on first and the mosquito repellent is the last thing that you want on top to greet the mosquitoes if they try to land on you. Reapply your sunscreen regularly and the last I'm sorry repellent regularly and the last thing I wanna emphasize is that if you've not worn repellent and you plan on like going hiking or someplace where you're going to be wearing it for a long period of time you might want to test it on yourself first and be sure that the product doesn't cause a skin reaction on you. And finally, for prevention is to remember that Zika is sexually transmitted and so being aware of that, wearing condoms if you've been in an area of active Zika transmission. That's really important too.

[Text] I'm a 28 year old man in good health. I plan on being in an area where Zika has been found.

Should I really be concerned about this? Part of me feels like this is the "disease to be scared of this year."

I think you should be concerned, mostly because Zika is the first mosquito-borne illness where not only it can be sexually transmitted which is new but it also of course causes can cause birth defects. So there are these, there's a new way of transmission and really possibly catastrophic results. So I think that it's important to be concerned in general even though you won't be pregnant as a young man and if that doesn't apply directly to you but of course people in your orbit, sexual partners may be. So when you're thinking about your own risk you want to think about your individual risk and of course beyond the, besides the difficulties with during pregnancy that we're concerned about, it is possible to get a rare condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome that involves paralysis so it is rare but it is a risk for anybody who might contract Zika. So that's something to think about. I'm probably most concerned with a young man who travels to an area of active Zika transmission that you make sure to be aware of sexual

transmission and wear condoms and keep in mind that you can transmit Zika when you are infected but don't know it. The vast majority of people who are infected with the Zika virus do not have symptoms. So if you've been to an active Zika area we expect, we consider you to have been exposed and therefore we ask that you take precautions so that you don't spread Zika to others sexually.

[Text] Should I be concerned about the aerial pesticide spraying of naled?

I think there's some concern about pesticide spraying in general. Whatever chemical is being used, the New York City Department of Health takes two precautions when they spray for mosquitoes which they've done for many years because there are concerns of course about West Nile virus and other viruses, other mosquito-borne diseases. And so they spray at night when there are fewer people out and they send around notices of when there will be spraying in which neighborhoods so that, and they ask that people stay inside as much as possible. Of course everyone can't do that but you do need to be aware that that's a precaution. You want to expose yourself to a chemical like a pesticide as little as possible and keep your pets and children and so on safe as well. Some people are especially sensitive to pesticides and can have skin reactions or eye reactions or worst of all sometimes respiratory reactions especially if you are someone with a chronic respiratory disease. So there are reasons to be concerned about any kind of fogging or aerial spraying because it's so difficult to control where it goes and that's one of the reasons why we really emphasize to people to try to eliminate mosquitoes at the source which is eliminate standing water and use those little larvicide tablets if there's standing water where you live that can't be eliminated.

[Text] Can you elaborate on risk factors of men transmitting Zika to their partners?

I would be happy to because this is becoming more and more of a concern. Sexual transmission in general is what we're concerned about. Of course, you can't, as far as we know now, it is not possible to transmit Zika by casual contact, by household contact. The only thing that we've confirmed right now with an unusual rare exception in one case out west, the only transmission we've concerned we confirmed from person to person is sexual transmission. So if you are if you have traveled to an area

where there is active Zika transmission but you do not have symptoms, then we say wait eight weeks before you have unprotected sex because there's a possibility that you could transmit Zika. Maybe you contracted it but like most people you won't have symptoms so you don't know you have it. So we ask if you've been exposed to, if you've been to an area of active transmission, to wait eight weeks before having sex without protection.

[Text] How long should partners wait to try and conceive if the man has vacationed in Latin America?

If you have no symptoms after traveling to a Zika area you wait eight weeks before having unprotected sex. If you have, if you are a man who did the traveling and you have symptoms it's recommended that you wait six months before having unprotected sex to try to ensure that you don't transmit the virus. We just don't know how long it stays in semen and so there are, you know that, so the recommendation now is six months but I'm sure that we'll learn more as time goes on.

[Text] How long should I wait to give blood after getting Zika?

Right now if you have had Zika infection the recommendation is to wait at least four weeks and I would add to that be sure that the donor center that you go to knows that you have been infected with Zika or knows that you have been to an area of active Zika transmission because they may go by additional guidelines at the blood center that you go to. But right now wait at least one month.

[Text] How can nurses be prepared for a patient with Zika or possible Zika symptoms?

The first thing is to remember that Zika is not transmitted by casual contact or even by caregiver to patient contact. There's been no documentation up to this time and the recommendation still is to use standard precautions. So you would be behaving around this person with Zika or suspected Zika as you would with any other patient with a disease that is only really a blood-borne type of disease, standard precautions only. Zika infections and the current Zika epidemic are a good reminder to us to be sure to take a travel history on patients with global travel and with the spread of diseases and climate change and other factors that are contributing to the spread of disease throughout the world, it's really important that we know where a patient has been. And so that should be a routine question in any of our assessments in

virtually any nursing setting, is whether or not you've been traveling recently. I think another big role for nurses here is to reassure people about Zika and by that I mean if someone has not been in an area of active transmission there's really not a lot of chance that whatever symptoms you may be having now are Zika infection. Local trends, if there's not local transmission, there's not active transmission of Zika virus locally, it's highly unlikely that one individual is going to be like the first case of Zika. People say well what if there's no active transmission now but I'm the first one to get it the chances of that are very low and secondly, it really takes, you need to keep in mind that it takes a lot of mosquitoes carrying the virus and a lot of people who begin to be infected by these mosquitoes before we start seeing symptoms and cases at all. So we're always back to prevention, making sure that you're using, that you're wearing long sleeves and you're protecting yourself with screens and you're eliminating standing water and using insecticides as needed. So that's really what we need to emphasize is prevention. And of course, always nurses should be keeping in mind that if you are talking to a pregnant woman and she has been in an area of active Zika transmission or has been perhaps exposed possibly through a sexual partner, it's really important that there be follow-up and that you hook that person up with good follow-up during pregnancy, keeping in mind that the CDC has a Zika pregnancy registry that this person should be part of. So again, as with anything we're always emphasizing prevention and nurses can play a large role in educating people about all the things we've been talking about today.

[Text] How can I keep up with need-to-know Zika information outside of the news?

The very best source that I always recommend for the most up-to-date information is the Centers for Disease Control website so that's CDC.gov. They have all sorts of Zika information. They have really neat handouts than you, that you can print out for your work setting or for yourself. There are, there's advice for specific individuals, meaning people who've traveled to areas of Zika transmission, if you're pregnant, if you're thinking of becoming pregnant. And as recommendations change, the first place that you're going to see them is on the CDC website. So I always recommend that as a terrific resource there's like TMI, there's more information that you can possibly read about Zika on the CDC site but you'll find what you're

looking for if you just tool around on their Zika section. And of course we would refer you also to our Zika portal here at Wolters Kluwer. So I thank you very much for your great questions and I hope that you will keep in touch with us through the portal and continue to keep up to date on the latest that's available on Zika.

Thank you.