

05 Jun 2018

Zika Virus: country category updates

Implications for pregnant women, women planning pregnancy and their partners

As of 5 June 2018, the following changes have been made to the country risk category for Zika virus transmission:

High risk

- Nicaragua (previously moderate risk)

Moderate risk

- Netherlands Caribbean islands (previously some islands in this group were classified as high risk)

Low risk

- Hidalgo County in Texas, USA (previously moderate risk)
- Marshall Islands (previously moderate risk)

Summary of current travel advice according to Public Health England / NaTHNaC Zika risk rating

High and moderate risk

1. Pregnant women:

- **should postpone non-essential travel to high risk areas** until after pregnancy
- **should consider postponing non-essential travel to moderate risk areas** until after pregnancy
- If travel is essential, be aware of the risk, be scrupulous with insect bite avoidance, seek advice from your GP or midwife on return, even if you have not been unwell

2. All travellers should avoid mosquito bites day and night. If you experience symptoms suggestive of ZIKV infection, seek medical advice (while the symptoms are still present)

3. Male travellers: if your female partner is pregnant, consistent use of condoms or other barrier methods is advised during vaginal, anal and oral sex to reduce the risk of transmission during travel and for the duration of the pregnancy even if you did not develop symptoms compatible with ZIKV infection if your female partner is planning pregnancy: effective contraception is advised to prevent pregnancy AND consistent use of condoms or other barrier methods is advised during vaginal, anal and oral sex to reduce the risk of transmission during travel and for 6 months after return even in the absence of symptoms

4. Female travellers: avoid becoming pregnant during travel and for 8 weeks after your last possible ZIKV exposure*

Low risk

- All travellers should avoid mosquito bites particularly between dawn and dusk
- Pregnant women should seek medical advice if they develop ZIKV symptoms, and contact their GP on return

* Last possible ZIKV exposure is defined as the date of leaving an area with high or moderate ZIKV risk, or the date on which unprotected sexual contact with a potentially infectious partner took place.

[Further information about the Zika virus](#) and the [rationale for the travel guidance](#) are available from Public Health England and NaTHNaC [Diseases in brief: Zika virus](#).

Resources

- [Zika virus in brief](#)
- [Public Health England: Zika virus clinical and travel guidance](#)
- [Zika virus update and advice for travellers](#)