



## **USA, UK & Canada Remove Barbados' Zika Warning**

### **What is Zika?**

Zika virus (ZIKV) is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes which predominantly feed between dawn and dusk (i.e. early morning and evening). A small number of cases of sexual transmission of ZIKV have also been reported.

Most people infected with ZIKV have no symptoms. When symptoms do occur they are usually mild and short-lived. Serious complications and deaths are not common. However, ZIKV is a cause of Congenital Zika Syndrome (microcephaly and other congenital anomalies) and neurological complications such as Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Zika Virus is present in Mexico, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, tropical areas of Southeast Asia, Oceania, and parts of Africa.

### **Who is potentially vulnerable?**

Pregnant women and those planning a pregnancy should be wary as the Zika virus infection during pregnancy increases the risk for serious birth defects since women can pass the virus to their unborn babies.

## **Is Zika still a risk in Barbados?**

In Barbados, there is currently no evidence of an ongoing Zika Virus outbreak. Furthermore, we have not had any reported cases of Zika in the population and there were no cases of Zika having a negative impact on pregnancy throughout the period when the infection was rampant.

## **What do we recommend?**

If you live in Barbados or are travelling to the island, we would recommend that you take precautions to reduce your chances of being bitten by a mosquito. Therefore, you should:

- Use a repellent containing 20%-30% DEET or 20% Picaridin on exposed skin. Re-apply according to manufacturer's directions.
- Wear neutral-coloured (beige, light grey) clothing. If possible, wear long-sleeved, breathable garments.
- Get rid of water containers around dwellings and ensure that door and window screens work properly.
- Apply sunscreen first followed by the repellent (preferably 20 minutes later).
- Use mosquito netting (bed net) when sleeping outdoors or staying in a building that is not completely enclosed and to cover playpens, cribs or strollers.
- Practice safe sex

Sources:

- <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice/152>
- <https://www.iamat.org/country/barbados/risk/zika-virus>