

March 8, 2017

Updated Information about the Zika Virus:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has changed the designation of the Zika virus from a global health emergency to a “significant, enduring public health challenge” that will require a sustained, longer-term response. In other words, the virus has become endemic. It still poses a significant risk due to its rapid spread, association with several neurological disorders, and possible dangers to the unborn children of pregnant women.

Spread from person to person by mosquito bites and possibly transmitted through sexual intercourse, the virus is widely present in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Zika virus symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, rash and reddened eyes. The incubation period may range from days to four weeks, however, only 20 percent of those infected by the virus develop symptoms, which generally resolve within seven days.

Women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant should consider delaying travel to identified high-risk destinations and all travelers, especially pregnant women, are advised to prevent insect bites. Mosquito precautions include wearing clothing that covers exposed skin and use of repellants, such as those containing permethrin, which can be applied to clothing, hats, boots and gear. Skin insect repellants such as DEET should be applied as directed on the product’s label. Men who travel to Zika transmission areas are advised to either abstain from sexual activity, or consistently use condoms with pregnant partners or partners who may become pregnant, until more information is known.

The New York State Department of Health has directed healthcare providers to report and test the following people who have traveled to a Zika transmission area:

- Any pregnant women
- Any non-pregnant women or men who have symptoms consistent with a Zika viral infection
- Any person who has developed Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a disorder of the body’s immune system (http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/gbs/detail_gbs.htm)

Any student who meets one of the above categories is encouraged to report to the Decker Student Health Services Center, where you will be assisted in making a report and arranging testing.

For more information on the Zika virus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>. If traveling, visit the CDC’s Zika Travel Information page at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>.

Please let the Office of International Education and Global Initiatives know if you have any questions or concerns or would like to meet with an advisor to discuss those concerns further. We are here to advise and support you!