

**Brazil is one of the 45 countries and territories in the Americas with ongoing transmission of the Zika Virus, and Rio de Janeiro has one of the highest numbers of reported Zika virus disease cases. The dengue and chikungunya viruses, transmitted by the same urban and diurnal vector, are also present in the Rio region, whereas the malaria parasite, transmitted by another mosquito is found in the Amazonian Basin, in the North-western part of the country.**

## **Before the trip**

### **What is the risk?**

- With the exception of pregnant women, Zika presents a **very low health risk** as compared to dengue, yellow fever, or malaria.
- **Only one out of four to five people** infected with Zika virus will develop symptoms, which are mild (rash, fever) and self-limited (around five days).
- Some adults have developed a transitory neurological syndrome (Guillain-Barré síndrome) although this seems to occur at an extremely low frequency.

### **And If I am pregnant?**

- The main threat posed by Zika is to **pregnant women**, whose foetus can suffer neurological malformations, including microcephaly, if the virus crosses the placenta.
- Pregnant women **must avoid travelling to regions with active virus transmission**. In case they have to go, they should avoid mosquito bites as much as possible (see: during the trip).

### **Are there vaccines?**

- To date, there is no approved Zika virus vaccine. However, it is important to make an appointment in an **international traveller information service** 4 to 6 weeks prior the trip in order to verify that you are prepared and vaccinated against other common tropical diseases.

During the appointment, you will receive general advice on the trip, an update of vaccines corresponding to the national programme in particular the MMR vaccine, as well as the hepatitis A and typhoid fever vaccinations if considered necessary.

- Concerning **mosquito-borne diseases**, yellow fever vaccination and malaria prophylaxis will be provided depending on the trip itinerary.
- Verify your **insurance** covers any medical expenses during the trip, including an eventual repatriation.



### **What should I pack?**

- Light and comfortable clothes, with natural fibres and light colours (mosquitoes are more attracted to synthetic fibres and dark colours that trap the heat), and closed and light footwear.
- Do not forget a first-aid kit with condoms, solar protection, insect repellent (certified for tropical regions, preferably with DEET >20%), acetaminophen, antidiarrheal medications, thermometer, soothing cream for insect bites.

## During the trip

### How do I protect myself?

• **Avoid mosquito bites** and use insect repellent. Besides Zika, other diseases like malaria, dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever are transmitted by mosquitoes and are common in Brazil.

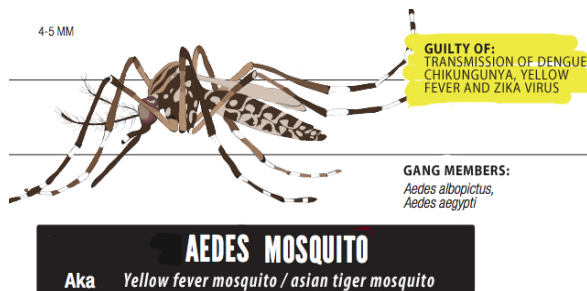
The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito bites mainly during the day and outdoors, so you should:

- Cover most of your body with long trousers and long sleeves, socks and closed shoes.
- Use insect repellent with DEET (between 20 and 50%), icaridin (more than 20%), IR3535 (more than 20%) or citriodiol (that protects during shorter periods of time) on all exposed skin.

Always apply the solar protection first. These products can be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

DEET is not recommended in children younger than two months of age. Some commercial brands are Relec, Goibi, Autan and Mosiguard.

- Sleep in rooms with air conditioning, mosquito screens, or under mosquito bed nets preferably treated with insecticide.
- **Use condoms** and avoid risky sexual behaviour.



### What do I do if I develop symptoms during the trip?

- Take acetaminophen as painkiller and antipyretic. Do not take aspirin or other non-steroid anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid transmitting the disease by preventing mosquito bites and using condoms.
- Go to a health centre in case of high fever and suspicion of malaria (if you are or were in a malaria endemic zone such as Manaus).

## After the trip

### If I do not develop symptoms?

• **Men** should use condoms during **8 weeks** after their return. If their partner is pregnant, they should practice safe sex during the entire pregnancy.

• As a precaution, **women** should wait 8 weeks after their return before conceiving.

• **Pregnant women** that have travelled to Zika-affected regions must inform their physician during prenatal visits even if they did not have symptoms, in order to closely monitor the baby's development.

### And if I have symptoms?

• If within the **three weeks** following the return you develop symptoms typical of Zika or other mosquito-borne diseases (dengue, chikungunya) you must go to a health professional and inform him/her of the countries you travelled to.

• To avoid infecting other people, **avoid mosquito bites** during one week after symptom onset.

• Men should use **condoms during 6 months** after disease recovery, to avoid transmitting the virus to his partner.

• Women should **wait 8 weeks** after recovery before they get pregnant.

### Other health risks?

• **Acute diarrhea** is the most frequent diagnosis among travellers and its risk can be decreased by washing your hands before every meal, brushing your teeth with bottled water, consuming only food that is cooked and bottled drinks, and avoiding ice cubes, fruit juices and artisanal ice creams.

• **Dengue and chikungunya** have initial symptoms similar to those of Zika, but have more severe clinical outcomes. The three diseases are transmitted by the same mosquito, so the preventive measures are the same.

• **Malaria** represents a risk for those that travel to Manaus or other Amazonian areas, and can be treated by a health professional in case of fever.

#### Where should I go?

#### HOSPITAL CLÍNICA DE BARCELONA

#### Servicio de Atención al Viajero Internacional

<http://www.hospitalclinic.org/es/ciudadano/centro-de-atencion-al-viajero-internacional-savi>

Tel. +34 93 227 93 00

#### Other centers:

<http://www.msssi.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/saludExterior/salud/centrosvacu.htm>