Information for People Traveling to Visit Friends and Relatives (VFRs) in Areas with Zika

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Who are VFRs?

- Travelers going to a country to visit friends or relatives
  - Foreign-born returning home, family members of foreign-born
  - Often speak and prefer another language
  - Prefer different health information sources
  - Destinations with less health infrastructure

Why are VFRs at increased risk of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue?

• Visit places with greater exposure to mosquito bites
  – Rural areas, no screens or AC
• Different behaviors than tourists
  – Don’t visit a doctor before travel
  – Less likely to follow preventive health precautions
  – Stay longer
• May not be aware of new risks in familiar places
• Anecdotal evidence suggests most travel-associated cases are among VFRs

Key Zika Messages: Before Travel

- Women who are pregnant should not travel to areas with Zika
- Women trying to get pregnant should talk to their healthcare providers and consider avoiding nonessential travel to areas with Zika
Key Zika Messages:
Packing Before Travel

- Pack enough EPA-registered repellent to last entire trip
  - DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or paramenthane-diol
- Treat clothes and gear with permethrin*
- Choose lodging with screens and/or AC if possible
- Bring mosquito net, if necessary
- Bring condoms

* Except in Puerto Rico, where mosquitoes are permethrin-resistant
Key Zika Messages: During Travel

• Prevent mosquito bites
  – Cover exposed skin with long-sleeved shirts and long pants
  – Use EPA-registered repellent during entire trip; follow instructions
  – Wear permethrin-treated* clothes and gear
  – Stay and sleep in screened in and air-conditioned places when possible

• Use condoms

* Except in Puerto Rico, where mosquitoes are permethrin-resistant
Key Zika Messages: After Travel

• Prevent mosquito bites for 3 weeks after returning—even if no symptoms
• If symptoms develop, go to doctor to get tested
• Use condoms or wait to try to get pregnant
  – Women: 8 weeks
  – Men: 6 months
What is CDC doing?

- Conducting formative research and message testing
- Developing multilingual education resources
- Collaborating with partner organizations
- Co-hosted webinar on September 20 for Latino-serving organizations with Health Initiative of the Americas
- Building web content
- Displaying messaging at ports of entry (POE)
Challenges in Reaching VFRs

- Nontraditional media channels\(^1\)
- Prefer to receive information in native language\(^1\)
- Effectiveness of messages varies by cultural and linguistic appropriateness\(^1\)
- Intercepting before travel\(^2\)
- In the border region, might not consider crossing “travel”

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\(^1\) [https://emergency.cdc.gov/workbook/pdf/ph_workbookfinal.pdf](https://emergency.cdc.gov/workbook/pdf/ph_workbookfinal.pdf)

What can you do?

• Identify VFRs at risk in your community
• Prioritize pregnant women and women of reproductive age
• Tailor outreach activities
  – Adapt messages for cultural context and language
  – Collaborate with community organizations and ethnic media
  – Provide in-person information, when possible
  – Link with healthcare providers used by VFRs
• Stay up-to-date on Zika information and travel advisories
• Align efforts with peak travel times
• Let CDC know how we can help
Sharing messages posted at ports of entry in your jurisdiction

- Are any posted?
- Where?
- By whom?
- What messages?

CDC Zika messaging at border crossing in Nogales, AZ
Resources

Q&A

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The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.