

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 08/12/2016**

TO: Grant County Media

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**Heather Massart, Public Information Officer  
509-766-7960 ext. 16Amber McCoy, Environmental Health Specialist  
509-766-7960 ext. 14

## **First Zika Virus Case Confirmed in Grant County Resident**

### **Man exposed to virus while traveling in Mexico**

GRANT COUNTY, WA – A Grant County man tested positive for Zika virus in early August. He was likely exposed to the virus during his recent travel to Mexico, a country known to have mosquitoes infected with the Zika virus. He was not hospitalized and has since recovered from the illness. This is the first case of Zika virus in a Grant County resident. There have been 22 Zika virus cases diagnosed statewide, all associated with travel.

#### **Should You Worry About Zika virus?**

**This Zika case does not pose a risk to the public in Grant County or in Washington State.** Zika virus is primarily spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes, or less commonly, through sexual contact with a recently infected man or woman. **The virus does not spread through casual contact with an infected person or from mosquitoes and other insects found in Washington.** According to the Washington State Department of Health, mosquitoes that transmit Zika virus, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*, are not found in Washington ([map of Aedes mosquitoes](#)); therefore, **there is currently no risk of local spread of the virus through mosquitoes.**

If you recently traveled to an area where Zika virus transmission is occurring, and are pregnant or experiencing illness and have questions about getting tested for Zika virus, talk with your healthcare provider and be sure to tell them where you traveled.

#### **What Are the Symptoms?**

Only one in five infected people will have any symptoms, which include fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. The illness is usually mild and can last a few days to a week. Symptoms typically begin two to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Many people who get Zika have no symptoms at all. Zika is also linked to [Guillan-Barré Syndrome](#), a problem marked by muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis.

#### **How Does Zika Spread?**

The virus spreads from:

- Bite from an infected mosquito
- Mother to fetus
- Sexual contact
- Blood transfusions

The CDC has determined that Zika can also be spread by an infected man or woman to his/ her sexual partners, even when he/ she does not have symptoms or know that he/ she is infected. It's important for



everyone who has traveled to an area with Zika to follow CDC's guidance to prevent [sexual transmission of Zika](#), even if they don't feel sick.

### **Zika Virus and Pregnancy**

Zika virus infection is a very serious concern for pregnant women because of its link to a birth defect in newborns called [microcephaly](#), an abnormally small brain and skull, and other poor pregnancy outcomes. To protect unborn babies from Zika virus:

- Pregnant women in any trimester should consider postponing travel to the areas where Zika virus is spreading. Pregnant women, or those trying to become pregnant, who do travel to one of these areas should talk to their doctor or other healthcare provider first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the trip.
- Pregnant women who have recently traveled to an area with Zika should talk to a doctor or other healthcare provider about their travel even if they don't feel sick.
- Pregnant women or women who may become pregnant should use condoms during sex with people who have traveled to Zika-affected areas.

### **How can I prevent Zika when traveling?**

No vaccine or medication is currently available to treat the virus. The best way to prevent the virus is to protect against mosquito bites. Strictly follow the steps below during the trip to a Zika infected area:

- Apply EPA-registered insect repellents (homemade repellents may not offer protection)
- Wear long sleeve shirts, pants, and closed toed shoes
- Use bed nets
- Avoid wearing perfume
- Wear Permethrin-treated clothing

### **Zika response in Grant County**

Grant County Health District staff are currently working with the Washington State Department of Health to:

- Coordinate with healthcare providers to arrange testing for patients at risk for Zika virus;
- Track cases and monitor for any additional cases; and
- Update the public and healthcare providers with the latest information

### **Mosquito-Carried Illnesses in Grant County**

Even though there is no risk of being infected with Zika virus from mosquitoes in Grant County, it is still important to avoid mosquito bites while living and playing here. West Nile virus (WNV), also an illness spread by mosquitoes, has been detected in Grant County for over a decade. Historically it is this time of year, during the late summer months, when people are at the greatest risk of exposure to WNV. To protect yourself and your family from WNV, use effective mosquito repellents while outdoors when mosquitoes are active and eliminate standing water around your home. Click [here](#) to learn more about WNV and other mosquito-carried illnesses in Washington.

### **For more information about Zika Virus visit:**

[Zika Virus in Washington State](#)

[www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/ZikaVirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/ZikaVirus)

[www.cdc.gov/zika/](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/)

[www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/question-answers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pregnancy/question-answers.html)

[www.granthealth.org/environment/vector-animals/zika-virus/](http://www.granthealth.org/environment/vector-animals/zika-virus/)