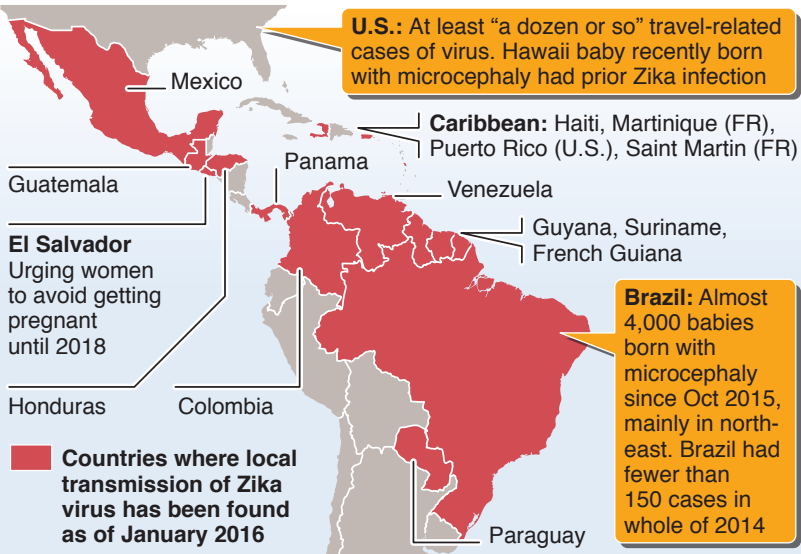


Zika virus alert over rising birth defects

The Zika virus, an infection linked to thousands of babies being born with the microcephaly brain defect, is spreading through the Americas



ZIKA VIRUS FACTS

Origin: First identified in Uganda in 1947. Has caused outbreaks in Africa, Southeast Asia and Pacific islands

Transmission: By bite of infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito

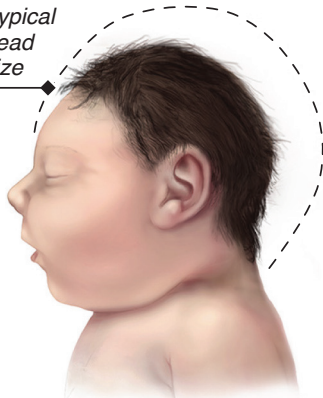
Symptoms: Include fever, rash, joint pain and red eyes. About one in five infected people fall sick – illness usually mild, lasting for several days to a week

Treatment: No vaccine or antiviral medicine available. Patients advised to rest and drink plenty of fluids

Concerns: Virus may affect unborn baby, resulting in reduced head size, or microcephaly. Children born with condition face learning difficulties or death if brain is very underdeveloped

Baby with microcephaly

Typical head size



Zika link with microcephaly not yet confirmed, but some babies who died had virus in their brain