

# Key facts about the Zika virus

The Zika virus, a mosquito-borne illness that may be linked to serious birth defects, was first identified in Uganda in 1947. Previous outbreaks were confined to a few small areas in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, but the disease is now spreading rapidly in Latin America and the Caribbean



## TRANSMISSION



Primarily through bite of infected *Aedes* mosquito – which also spreads dengue and yellow fever. Evidence suggests that virus may also be transmitted by blood transfusion, sexual contact, or from mother to foetus during pregnancy, but these instances are rare

## SYMPTOMS



Include fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes (conjunctivitis) and headache. About one in five people thought to develop symptoms – illness often mild, lasting from two to seven days. Most people fully recover without serious complications. Deaths are rare

## TREATMENT



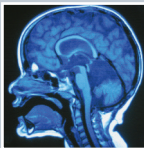
No vaccine or antiviral medicine available. Patients advised to rest and drink plenty of fluids. Prevention entails avoiding contact with mosquitoes. Health officials recommend covering up, using insect repellent and keeping windows closed or screened

## MICROCEPHALY



Virus suspected of causing brain defect in babies, resulting in reduced head size. Affected children face learning disabilities or death if brain is very underdeveloped. Microcephaly cases in Brazil have surged from average of 163 per year to almost 4,000 since October 2015

## GUILLAIN-BARRE SYNDROME



Rare disorder in which body's immune system attacks part of nervous system, causing weakness and sometimes paralysis. Most patients recover, but syndrome can be deadly. Cases linked to Zika have been reported in Brazil and French Polynesia

## TRAVEL ADVICE



CDC recommends that pregnant women postpone travel to areas where Zika is spreading locally. List includes 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries – as far north as Mexico – plus Samoa and Cape Verde. Northeastern Brazil hardest hit by virus