

Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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February 29, 2016 2nd Confirmed Case of Zika Virus

The Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department (A/TCHHSD) has confirmed the second positive case of Zika virus. The person, a female under the age of 50, contracted the illness while travelling to Colombia. Over 40 Austin/Travis County residents are currently being tested for Zika. While these two confirmed cases contracted the virus during travel abroad, the mosquito that carries Zika is endemic to Central Texas.

The greatest concern with the virus is its potential impact upon pregnant women due to potential links to microcephaly (babies born with abnormally small heads) and Guillain-Barre syndrome, a condition in which the immune system attacks the nerves. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. A link to the guidance can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6502e1.htm>

Zika virus is transmitted to persons primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito (*Aedes* species). A/TCHHSD continues to encourage people to follow travel precautions and avoid mosquito bites. The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is typically mild and resolves within one week.

Preventative measures residents can take to avoid mosquito bites include draining any water that has collected around your property, wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and ensuring that window screens are properly maintained and using EPA-registered insect repellents. The mosquitoes that spread Zika virus bite primarily during the day, but they also bite at night in well lit areas.

A/TCHHSD will be posting test results and provide a weekly summary of Zika activity in Austin/Travis County at : <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/zika-virus>.

Interview Op: Dr. Philip Huang, A/TCHHSD Medical Director and Health Authority will be available for interviews today from 2:30 pm-3:30 at the RBJ Health Center; 15 Waller. Please check in to the security desk when you arrive.

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