Zika Virus

Key Points

- Zika virus is spread primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito, through sexual contact, or from a pregnant woman to her fetus. Zika virus is not passed directly from person to person through casual contact.
- For most children and adults, Zika virus infection will not cause symptoms or will only cause mild symptoms.
- Zika virus infection during pregnancy is associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes and certain birth defects; therefore, special considerations for preventing exposure might be needed for pregnant women, women trying to conceive, and their male sexual partners.
- School jurisdictions should proactively establish effective channels of communication with local government and public health authorities regarding response plans for local transmission of Zika virus disease.
- School administrators can help provide safe school environments through mosquito bite prevention efforts and sharing of accurate Zika virus information with staff members, students, and families.
- It is not recommended for schools to remove students or staff members who have Zika virus disease or who were exposed to Zika virus, or to cancel school-related activities because of Zika virus concerns.
- Nondiscrimination and privacy and confidentiality measures should be maintained for all students and staff members.
- Schools can help to reduce risk for students, families, and the community by implementing mosquito control measures on school grounds, such as identifying and removing sources of standing water that can serve as mosquito breeding sites. Common sources on school grounds can include buckets, trash cans, planters, tires, tall grasses, playground equipment, and spaces beneath temporary modular structures. Adjustments can be made to ensure these do not become mosquito breeding areas, including regularly cleaning, turning over, tightly covering, or completely removing (if appropriate) these sources; sweeping away pools of water; and keeping all grassy areas mowed (including less-traveled and hard-to-access areas such as under bleachers). In addition, efforts should be made to prevent mosquitoes from entering classrooms by placing new screens or replacing damaged screens in windows and doors, or by using air conditioning when available.