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ZIKA VIRUS

The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) is monitoring the recent reported cases of Zika virus infection in Tonga, America Samoa, and the Americas. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently declared Zika as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

Zika is a disease caused by the Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they bite a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. It can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth.

The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week. Anyone who is living in or traveling to an area where Zika virus is found who has not already been infected with Zika virus is at risk for infection, including pregnant women.

There is no vaccine to prevent infection or medication to treat. The best way to prevent diseases spread by mosquitoes is to avoid being bitten. DPHSS encourages residents to protect yourself and your loved ones from mosquito bites.

Travelers can protect themselves by doing the following:

- Choose a hotel or lodging with air conditioning or screens on windows or doors.
- Sleep under a mosquito bed net if you are outside or in a room that is not well-screened.
- See your healthcare provider if you develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes within 2 weeks after traveling to a country where Zika virus cases have been reported. Be sure to tell your health care provider where you traveled.

All health care providers on Guam are urged to be on alert for possible cases of Zika in visitors or residents who recently traveled to areas affected by Zika virus and to **promptly report suspect cases** to the Office of Epidemiology and Research at 735-7298.

Information on Zika can be retrieved at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>. For more information, please call the DPHSS Office of Epidemiology and Research at 735-7298.



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