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KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

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DOH INVESTIGATING TRAVEL-RELATED ZIKA CASE ON O'AHU

25-061



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU — The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) is investigating a confirmed travel-related case of Zika virus along with two individuals who may have been exposed.

The DOH asks for support in reducing the potential for the spread of Zika virus, which is carried by mosquitoes. Vector control teams are responding and will continue operations in areas where the individuals spent time, including neighborhoods in

Waiialua/Hale'iwa area on O'ahu. DOH will continue to monitor mosquito activity in the affected areas and implement further control measures as needed.

The public is urged to take additional precautions to avoid mosquito bites and reduce mosquito breeding. The department is calling on residents, businesses and visitors to support efforts to prevent Zika transmission by following these steps:

- Apply insect repellent on exposed skin, especially when outdoors. Use products registered with the Environmental Protection Agency that contain 20–30% DEET. Other effective ingredients include picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus and IR3535. Visit the EPA's website to find the right repellent.
<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you>
- Wear loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Keep mosquitoes out of homes and businesses by ensuring screens are intact and doors are kept closed.
- Remove standing water around homes and buildings, including water in buckets, flower pots, used tires and plants such as bromeliads.

Zika virus symptoms are typically mild and may include fever, rash, headache, joint pain, red eyes and muscle pain. Symptoms typically last a few days to a week. About 80% of Zika infections are asymptomatic. Hospitalization and death from Zika are uncommon. Rarely, Zika infection may cause damage to the nerves, brain, or spinal cord as well as a blood disorder that can result in bleeding, bruising or slow blood clotting.

Zika infection during pregnancy can cause [serious birth defects](#) and is linked to pregnancy complications, including miscarriage, stillbirth and preterm birth.

Zika virus spreads primarily from infected person, to mosquito, to another person. While Hawai'i has the mosquito species capable of transmitting Zika, the virus is not established in Hawai'i. The most recent travel-related Zika case in Hawai'i was reported in 2019. Travel-associated cases were more frequently reported in Hawai'i during 2015-2019 when Zika was circulating globally, peaking at 25 cases in 2017. No locally acquired cases have been documented in Hawai'i.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises travelers to check current [Zika risk information](#) before departure. Travelers should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites during their trips, and for three weeks after returning. This includes using EPA-registered repellent, wearing protective clothing and staying in air-conditioned or screened rooms or under insecticide-treated bed nets. Travelers returning from an area with risk of Zika should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks after their return.

Anyone experiencing symptoms within two weeks after visiting an area with risk of Zika should consult a healthcare provider and inform them of possible exposure in a Zika-affected area. Testing is not routinely recommended for travelers who do not have symptoms.

Zika can also be transmitted [through sex](#) from a person who has Zika to their partners, even if the infected person does not have symptoms at the time. The virus has been found in semen, vaginal fluids, saliva, urine and breast milk. The CDC recommends that after travel to an area with risk of Zika, men use condoms or abstain from sex for at least three months. For women, use condoms or abstain for at least two months.

Regardless of where you live, if mosquitoes are active in your area, wear long clothing and use insect repellent – especially at dawn and dusk – to reduce the risk of mosquito bites.

For more information, please visit the [Disease Outbreak Control Division \(DOCD\) website](#) and [Vector Control Branch \(VCB\) website](#).

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