



Zika Virus Response Plan

This past Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the [Loudoun County Zika Virus Response Plan](#). The Board also appropriated a contingency fund of \$100,000 for mosquito abatement. This fund would only be used for targeted mosquito control efforts if recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For example, the fund could be used after confirmed instances in which mosquitoes in Loudoun County transmit Zika virus from an infected person to others within the community.

It is important to note that ***Zika is usually a very mild infection except if you are pregnant.*** If you are not pregnant, the main health reason for taking steps to prevent Asian tiger mosquitoes and mosquito bites is to help keep pregnant women and their babies in your community safe. Additionally, mosquito bites can be very annoying so reducing mosquitoes around your home and wearing insect repellent can help make your summer much more enjoyable.

The Zika Response Plan provides Zika-related prevention as well as response and mitigation actions for the community. These steps include preparedness, public education and outreach (particularly to pregnant women), disease surveillance and testing, and mosquito control activities.

The county's Zika Virus Response Plan, which is consistent with the Commonwealth of Virginia's Zika response plan and CDC guidance, includes four risk-based phases:

1. Preparedness;
2. Mosquito Season (May - October);
3. Confirmed Local Transmission in Region Outside Loudoun County or Increased Local Concern; and

4. Widespread Local Transmission in Region or Potential Local Transmission in Loudoun County.

In cases where an increased risk of a locally-acquired outbreak is detected, concerted containment and large-scaled mosquito control may be required to minimize mosquito to human contact. The county's plan includes focused, door-to-door interventions, such as education, removal of mosquito breeding grounds, and the use of larvicide and/or pesticide application around the area deemed at high risk for local disease transmission.

Prevention Steps for All Loudoun Residents:

Mosquito season in Virginia typically runs from May through October. During that time, the Loudoun County Health Department encourages everyone to focus on ways to guard against the threat of mosquito-borne illnesses. The Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes Albopictus*), is the most common cause of mosquito bites in Virginia and is capable of transmitting Zika virus. While Loudoun County is prepared to combat Zika virus, there are simple steps that each of us can take to protect ourselves and our families:

1. Prevent Mosquito Bites

Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts to cover exposed skin and use EPA-registered insect repellent according to the product label. Because the Asian tiger mosquito is mainly a daytime biter, it is important to wear repellent during the day and night. Also, make sure windows have screens and doors are closed to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

2. Eliminate Mosquito Breeding Sites Around Your Home

Asian tiger mosquitoes reproduce in containers with standing water and usually do not fly long distances. They do not like to breed in ponds, streams or swamps. Reducing breeding sites around your home will help to control mosquito populations near you. Follow these steps:

- Replace or dump out water in bird baths, pet bowls, and other water features, at least weekly.
- Dispose of containers and other items that can capture water, such as drink containers, tires, toys, tarps, etc.
- Look for sources of standing water, such as potted plants, roof gutters, air conditioners, corrugated drain pipes, etc.
- If standing water cannot be removed, consider treating the water with larvicide, which prevents mosquitoes from developing and are available at home improvement stores.

3. Look for Symptoms of Zika especially for Pregnant Women*

The most common symptoms of Zika virus include fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes) and last about a week. Most people who are infected do not know they have Zika and do not seek medical care.

**The Centers for Disease Control recommends special precautions for pregnant women because Zika virus is a cause of a birth defect called microcephaly. Pregnant women should not travel to areas in the world where Zika virus is spreading, take steps to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes, and consult with their doctors for more information on the risks associated with Zika.*

The Loudoun County Zika Response Plan and more information about Zika virus prevention are posted at www.loudoun.gov/zika. If you have any additional questions about Zika, please contact the Loudoun County Health Department via email at health@loudoun.gov.

All my best,



Tony

Blue Ridge District Supervisor

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