



Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services

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First Local Zika Virus Case Confirmed in Cameron County

Cameron County officials and the Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services announced today the first local Zika virus case likely transmitted by a mosquito has been confirmed in Cameron County. A 43-year old woman from Brownsville tested positive and reported no recent travel to Mexico or anywhere else with ongoing Zika virus transmission and no other risk factors. The woman is not pregnant.

“Based on the information we have, this patient has a negative blood test which indicates that she can no longer spread the infection by mosquito,” states Dr. James W. Castillo, Cameron County Health Authority. “This is a reminder that everyone should remain vigilant about Zika. If a woman is pregnant or is considering becoming pregnant, she should be evaluated for possible Zika virus exposure during each prenatal care visit. Each evaluation should include an assessment of signs and symptoms of Zika virus disease such as fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis.”

Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services has implemented their Zika action response plan and is working with the Texas Department of State Health Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to investigate and respond to the case. Further investigation is being conducted in an effort to pinpoint how and where the infection occurred. “We will begin conducting door-to-door Zika screenings in the area where the case lived to minimize the threat of additional Zika transmission,” states Esmeralda Guajardo, Health Administrator. “We are urging the residents who are asked to participate in the screenings, to take advantage of them and the education being offered to help us address the risk and minimize it”.

Cameron County is also working with the City of Brownsville Health Department and Texas Department of State Health Services to conduct vector control activities to minimize the breeding of mosquitoes with Zika. Mosquito traps have been set up in the area and the City of Brownsville has conducted mosquito spraying. While public health employees are conducting these response efforts in the area, public health workers will be also be conducting environmental assessments and Zika education to the residents to eliminate potential breeding sites.

CCDHHS continues to emphasize the importance of the following prevention methods:

- Apply EPA-registered mosquito repellent that contains **DEET** (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Spray exposed skin and clothing with repellent. Be sure to read label instructions on any repellent and use as directed. Dress protectively by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and shoes when you are outside. Drain standing water in your backyard and neighborhood..
- Use air conditioning or window/door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Stay indoors to prevent mosquito bites.
- Keep in mind that mosquitoes that spread the Zika virus bite mostly during the daytime so county residents should use precautions throughout the day. If you are not able to protect yourself from mosquitoes inside your home or hotel, sleep under a mosquito bed net.
- Use protection during sex especially if your partner traveled to an area with Zika or if you are pregnant or considering getting pregnant. Women and men who are considering starting or expanding their family should talk to their healthcare provider to inform their decisions about timing of pregnancy.

The Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services will continue working with the local municipalities in the education, surveillance and vector activities and will alert the public with any necessary updates.