

## Zika: Ideas for Talking to Your Child About Zika

Jennalee Gaiser, DO

Ronald Januchowski, DO, FACOFP, Editor | Paula Gregory, DO, FACOFP, Health Literacy Editor



Zika virus disease (Zika) has been in the media and a hot topic for travelers. Children may have many questions about Zika and if they better understand the facts, they can better cope with disease outbreak. Speaking to your child with facts, and tailoring the conversation to their age and concerns can help them cope with Zika and spread understanding.

### SHARE WITH THEM FACTS & WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT ZIKA:

- It is extremely rare, fewer than 1,000 cases in the US per year.
- It is spread mostly from the bite of mosquitoes that are infected with Zika virus.
- You can only get Zika if you live or travel to an area where the mosquitos are known to be infected and you get bitten.
- Most people bit by a Zika infected mosquito will not actually get sick! Those that do, may only feel sick for a few days, and may not even know they have Zika virus.
- People that do get sick from Zika will display some flu-like symptoms that include some fever, rash, headache, joint pain, or red eyes.
- There is no specific treatment, vaccine, or medicine for Zika virus, therefore the best thing we can do is prevent the bite! Plenty of rest, rehydration and medicine for pain can help for those sick with Zika virus.
- Children can help adults be diligent in protecting everyone with insect repellent and appropriate clothing.
- Health care providers can do blood tests for Zika virus if they suspect infection.

### ASK WHAT THEY KNOW & UNDERSTAND ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS

- Correct misinformation gently.
- Understand their fears and concerns about Zika.

### EXPLAIN HOW THEY CAN HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ZIKA VIRUS:

Best way is to prevent getting any mosquito bites. Things to prevent bites include:

- Long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Screens on windows and doors and/or air-conditioning
- Sleeping under a bed-net if traveling to area where Zika is prominent
- Using EPA-registered insect repellent, let an adult do this if child is younger
- Infants <2 months old should not use insect repellent
- Apply repellent to any skin not covered by clothing
- If using sunscreen in addition to repellent, apply sunscreen first, then repellent on-top
- Remove standing water from around your home or lodging. Places like buckets or tires are mosquito breeding grounds

If you have questions or concerns about talking to your child about Zika, or you want to understand more about your risk, please talk with your Osteopathic Family Physician.

---

**SOURCE(S):** American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and World Health Organization

The *Osteopathic Family Physician* Patient Handout is a public service of the ACOFP. The information and recommendations appearing on this page are appropriate in many instances; however, they are not a substitute for medical diagnosis by a physician. For specific information concerning your medical condition, ACOFP suggests that you consult your family physician. This page may be photocopied noncommercially by physicians and other healthcare professionals to share with their patients. For additional patient related educational material please visit our website at [www.acofp.org](http://www.acofp.org).