

Zika: A devastating virus — how can

By Dan Howard

FOR TRIB TOTAL MEDIA

Imagine: It is a happy time of celebration. It could be a wedding, graduation, church picnic, reunion or a housewarming party. There is a single unwanted guest at this joyous event....and we are not talking about obnoxious Uncle Harry. It is a smaller and much more destructive guest. It is a mosquito carrying the Zika virus.

With one tiny mosquito bite during an otherwise joyful event, the life of a family and its unborn child are changed and challenged forever. Let's learn to avoid that outcome.

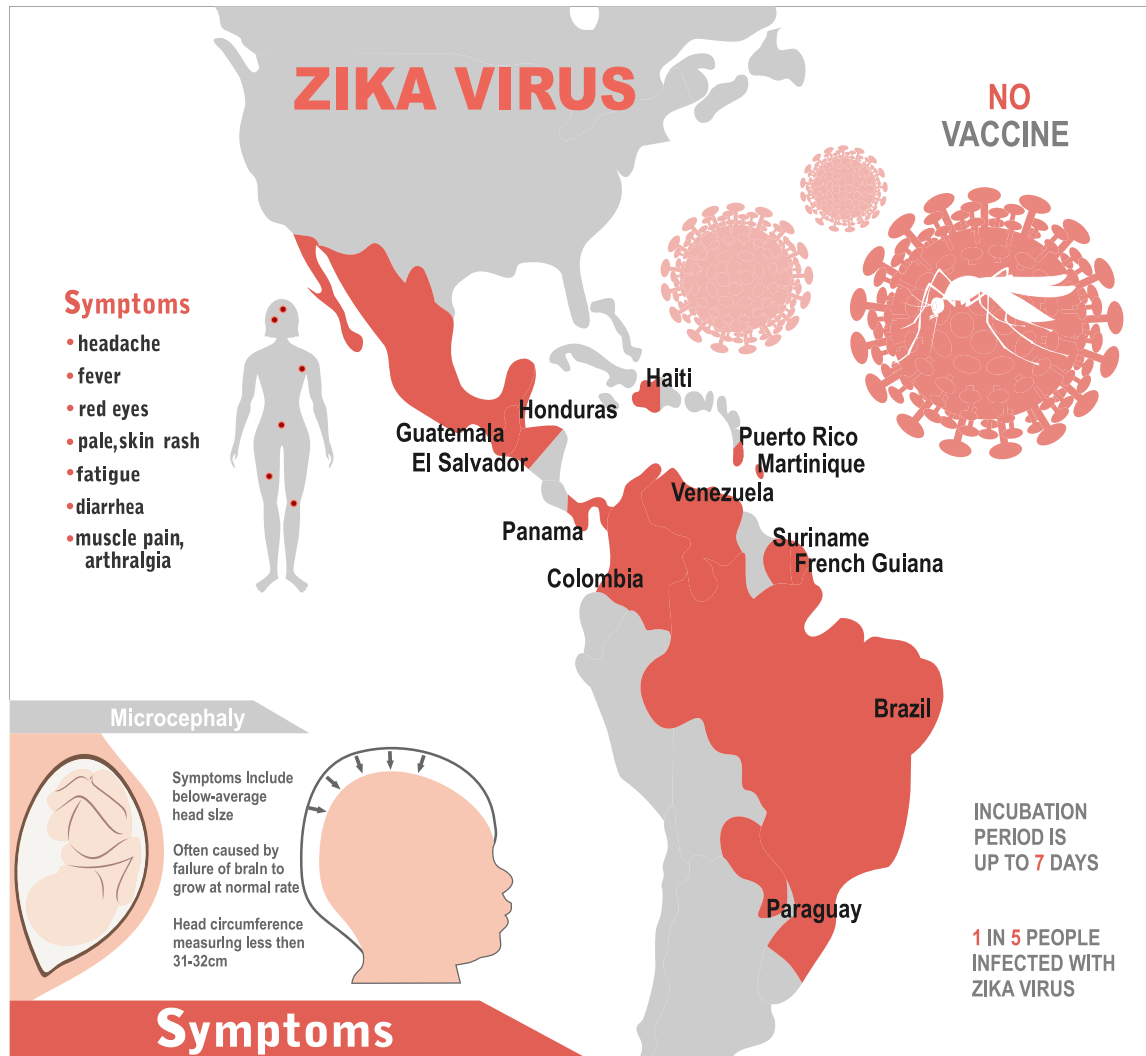
The Zika virus is a real problem. Birth defects caused by this virus are there for life. Day after day, year after year, the consequences of a single mosquito bite can change the life experience of an entire family with a child contracting the birth defects caused by Zika.

The Zika virus can cross a mother's placenta and enter a fetus's blood stream. The result can be a congenital defect known as microcephaly. This is a condition where the brain and the head of the baby do not develop. In layman's words, it results in a small head and diminished brain on a regular-sized body.

Microcephaly is an untreatable and irreversible birth defect. The CDC and NIH are also concerned that Guillain-Barre syndrome, fetal deaths and premature births are other consequences of this virus.

The first symptom could be an innocent child's birth defect

According to the Pan American Health Organization, for most people that contract the virus, there are little to no symptoms of the illness. There are



mild flu like symptoms for only about 20% of those infected. These symptoms are a low fever, muscle aches and a rash.

How Zika found its way into the United States

Researchers first isolated the transmissible agent in the Rhesus Macaque in 1952 and discovered that little infectious gem in a human being living in Nigeria in 1954. Identified infections remained limited to Africa and Asia until 2007. In April 2007, the RNA (virus equivalent of our DNA) evidence of the virus was found in Micronesia. The virus then spread from the South Pacific to South America, Central America and then the Caribbean.

Now, according to the CDC, the Zika virus is here in the

United States. It is not that mosquitos have traveled that distance. According to the American Mosquito Control Association, many breeds of mosquitos seldom travel more than 300 feet from their birthplace. With that in mind, we know that they do not fly across the great oceans. We, the people, traversing the world in modern transportation modes, carry their virus with us. We then are bitten by mosquitos in our destination, and those mosquitos then carry the virus to a new host. The virus spreads from that new location.

Today's reality is that viruses swimming in an unsuspecting traveler's blood stream are easier to carry across an ocean or continent than getting an oversized travel bag onto an airplane. The

virus is also spread by bodily fluids between sexual partners.

In summary, as with many of the communicable diseases, it is the result of a modern world where a person living in Africa can travel to South America in much less than a day. If you travel to the Caribbean, you can be in the United States in hours. A cruise, family vacation or trip to the Rio de Janeiro Olympics can bring this virus into your life and the life of your friends, family and neighbors.

More to the point, if your neighbor visits an area with the virus, the mosquito can first bite your neighbor and then bring the virus into your back yard or home.



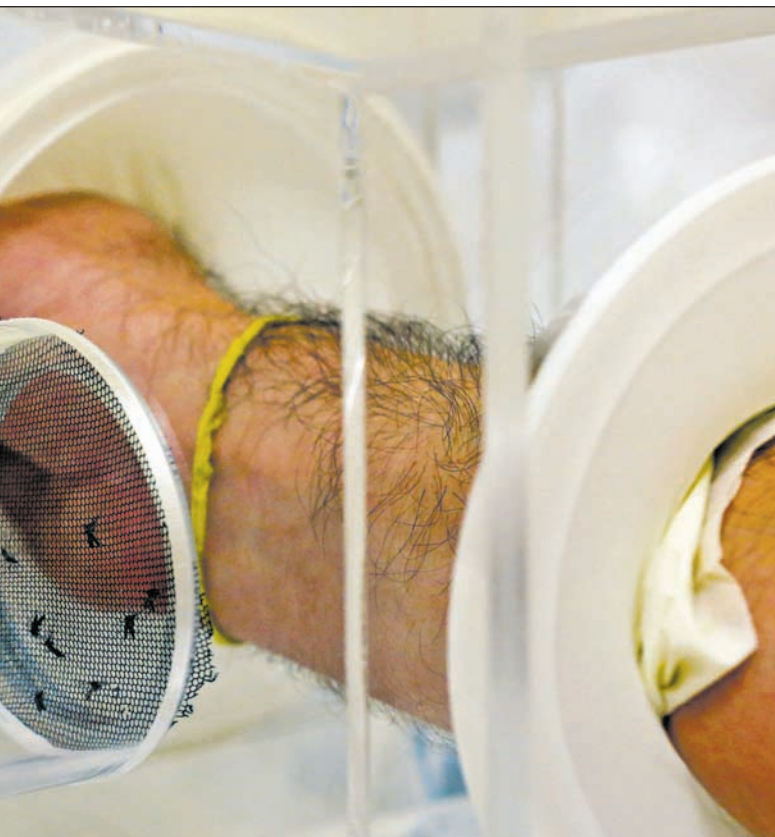
Florida International University's Matt part his research that could help comb

Who is most at risk?

According to the international general medical journal, The Lancet, about 200 million Americans — more than 60 percent of the population — reside in areas of the United States that might be conducive to the spread of Zika virus. Another 22.7 million people live in humid, subtropical parts of the country that might support the spread of Zika virus all year round, including southern Texas and Florida.

That calculation does not include visitors and vacationers to the areas outlined. A young "mother to be" or her sexual partner visiting a destination such as Florida could be infected while enjoying an otherwise wonderful vacation.

we protect ourselves?



Matthew DeGennaro tests mosquitoes' attraction to the scent of humans as part of a study on the Zika virus.



GETTY IMAGES

The *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito: The prime carrier of the Zika virus.

Mosquito Terminators home treatment for individual homes are about \$69.00 for a ½-acre lot. Depending upon the length of mosquito season in an area, between 10 to 15 treatments would be required for a season of mosquito protection for a home.

The Good News

The Zika virus is a serious threat to unborn children. The good news is that as in the past, when a serious health problem arises the world works together to find a solution. Our lesson is that until resolved, we need use the available precautions to protect ourselves and our neighbors.

For additional information and important health agency links and resources for Zika, its prevention and treatment recommendations, go to <http://www.pittsburghmoldtesting.com/ZikaVirus>

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What can we do to protect our loved ones from this threat?

We must take every possible precaution to interrupt the process of mosquitoes infecting people with the Zika virus. The American Mosquito Association refers to this approach as "the 3 D's of Integrated Pest Management: Drain, Dress and Defend"

- Wear light covered, loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- Apply insect repellent using EPA and CDC recommended products and methods
- Remove any items that contain standing water from the area (such as tires, water buckets, roof gutters, bird baths, etc.)
- Use screens in windows and air conditioning in sealed homes where possible

- Conduct a barrier spray program.

The best defense for protecting guests at celebrations, events

Treating the grounds for a special event like a wedding, graduation, carnival, pool party or any public event may save someone at a celebration from the defects caused by Zika.

If you have a possible home exposure of a pregnant woman, a barrier spray program may better meet your safety needs. Based on the life cycle of mosquitos, a 14-day cycle may provide the best control and safety.

According to Mosquito Terminators, a national insect control franchise, a special event mosquito barrier spray program for two pre-event treatments can start at \$125.00. The area and conditions will affect the cost.

U-BILD CRAFTS



Throws lend a touch of luxury

By The U-Bild Craft Staff

Nothing says "nap" like a soft, hand-knitted throw draped over an easy chair or across the foot of a bed. A nearly irresistible invitation to snuggle up and read, watch a movie or snooze, a handmade throw adds a touch of luxury to a room—and few gifts are more appreciated.

If you'd like to add a little luxury to your life (or share it with someone else), all you need are some knitting needles, yarn and a full-color, 13-page guidebook. "Quick-Knit Throws" features step-by-step instructions for four original throw designs that are downright decadent.

If you're beginner or you just need to brush up on your knitting skills, a section of general instructions will help you get started. An illustrated stitch guide, a knitting needle conversion

chart, a word about gauge, a guide to abbreviations and a yarn-weight chart round out the collection.

Full-color photos of each completed throw make it easy to choose the perfect project. Designs include "Sprigs and Braids" (pictured), "Ripple," "Earthtone Plaid" and "White Feathers."

The "Quick-Knit Throws" guidebook, No. LA3615, is \$6.95. If you need to start at the beginning, try "Learn to Knit in Just One Day," No. AN1210, a 33-page guidebook available for \$6.95. Please include \$4.00 for postage and handling per order and allow about two weeks for delivery.

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