



## Hays County, Texas

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### Information for the News Media

Dec. 29, 2016

*Note to Editors: Hays County Epidemiologist Eric Schneider is available to discuss mosquito-borne diseases and their prevention in greater detail at [512-393-5525](tel:512-393-5525); however, due to patient privacy requirements, no further details about the patient or city of residence of the patient are available.*

## Agencies Confirm First Case of Travel-related Zika Virus in Hays County

**Hays County Courthouse, San Marcos, TX** – The Hays County Local Health Department has received confirmation from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of a local, **travel-associated** case of Zika virus infection in Hays County. The individual, who is not contagious and does not pose a risk to Hays County residents, contracted the illness while traveling to Puerto Rico in August 2016.

The mosquito that carries Zika is native to Central Texas. Zika virus is transmitted to persons primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito (*Aedes* species, which can also transmit West Nile virus, dengue fever and chikungunya virus). The *Aedes* mosquitos are aggressive daytime biters and are located near populated areas.

The most common symptoms of Zika virus disease are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is typically mild and lasts about one week. During that time, a mosquito that bites an infected person can carry the virus to the next person it bites, so it is critical to follow your health care provider's recommendation to reduce exposure to others.

### **Preventative measures residents can take to avoid mosquito bites include:**

- Draining any water around their property (mosquitos can breed in as little as a

- bottle cap full of water)
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Using EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus (follow directions closely)

## Travel Precautions in Texas

On December 14, 2016, CDC issued guidance related to Zika for people living in or traveling to Brownsville, Cameron County, TX. On November 28, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported the state's [first case](#) of local mosquito-borne Zika virus infection in Brownsville. Additional cases of mosquito-borne Zika have been identified in the area, suggesting that there is a risk of continued spread of Zika virus in Brownsville, TX.

On January 22, 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) posted interim guidelines for health care providers in the United States caring for pregnant women during a Zika virus outbreak. Zika infection in pregnant women may be associated with congenital microcephaly and fetal loss. Guillain-Barre syndrome has also been reported in patients after suspected Zika infection. **CDC is recommending that all pregnant women consider postponing travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.** A link to the guidance can be found at

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6502e1.htm>.

Persons with suspected infections should also be evaluated and managed for possible dengue and chikungunya virus. Aspirin and other NSAID's should be avoided until dengue can be ruled out to reduce the risk of hemorrhage.

The Hays County Epidemiology Team continues to remind local health care providers and partner organizations to be aware of Zika as they see patients and to ask about travel history. The County works with providers to help them assess the need for laboratory

testing and facilitate testing from the State Health Department lab in Austin.

Hays County encourages people to follow travel precautions and avoid mosquito bites. The Zika virus has been declared an emerging public health threat by the World Health Organization. For more information about the Zika virus, visit [www.TexasZika.org](http://www.TexasZika.org) and <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/> and for information about the Hays County Mosquito Surveillance Program visit [Fight the Bite](#).

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