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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Kent County Health Department Urges Caution to Spring Break Travelers Because of Zika Concerns**

Spring break is the time of the year when many in West Michigan choose to travel and make memories with their friends, families, or loved ones. Unfortunately, this year, many of the foreign destinations favored by sun seekers are also those areas that are affected by the Zika virus. Because of the potential link between Zika and birth defects, the Kent County Health Department is urging pregnant women in any trimester to reconsider travel to those areas. Anyone travelling to an affected area is urged to take precautions against mosquito bites.

The Zika virus is spread primarily by the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. The disease has not been found in mosquitoes in the United States, but has been found in Puerto Rico, Mexico and much of Central and South America. ([SEE MAP](#)). The most common symptoms of Zika are mild and may include a fever, rash, joint pain and red itchy eyes. These symptoms usually last just a few days. The virus can also be spread sexually from infected men. Most people who get the virus will never experience any symptoms. Currently, no vaccine or cure exists for the Zika virus.

“For people who are travelling in those areas, avoiding mosquito bites is the best prevention against this virus,” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer with the Kent County Health Department. “We encourage women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant to consider postponing their trips out of an abundance of caution. Anyone who has travelled to one of these areas and experiences symptoms either while on the trip or within about a week of being home should contact their doctor.”

The CDC recommends using mosquito repellants that contain DEET or other [EPA approved repellants](#). Use only as directed and reapply often. Dress in long, loose and light colored clothes while outside, especially during the day. The mosquito that spreads Zika is an aggressive day biter. Travelers going to an affected area can further protect themselves by choosing lodging with air conditioning or screens to keep mosquitoes out and by staying indoors during daylight hours.

More Information about Zika is available by going to <https://accesskent.com/Health/CommDisease/zika.htm>

**Media Note:** High Definition soundbites are available for your use via the KCHD News Network in the links below.

These are recorded in digital audio and may be used for radio actualities and web content as well.

Feel free to edit as you see fit.

NOTE: There is: 05 of silent “pad” in front of each audio clip.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nB-3ueCNzbA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2iJotrI05o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go-8oRnODj8>

Please courtesy “Kent County Health Department.”

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).