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Public Health Closely Monitors for Zika Virus Disease

Princeton, NJ– Princeton Health Department reminds travelers to protect themselves from mosquitoes during the outbreak of Zika virus disease. The outbreak is ongoing in 24 countries or territories, including Latin America, the Caribbean and Puerto Rico. Zika is a reportable disease and local physicians are encouraged to contact the Princeton Health Department to report any possible Zika patients for further assessment.

“Zika is one of several mosquito-borne diseases that may infect travelers, including chikungunya and dengue,” said Jeffrey Grosser, MHS, Health Officer for Princeton. “Avoid mosquito bites, especially when visiting places known to have these diseases. Use approved EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] bug spray and wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants or clothing specially treated to avoid mosquito bites. Pregnant women should avoid travel to the areas where the outbreak is ongoing, if possible.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a travel alert informing people traveling to countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing to take strict precautions to prevent being bitten by mosquitos and recommend that pregnant women consider postponing their travel. Zika virus may cause birth defects if pregnant women. Pregnant women who do travel should talk with their health care provider first and ensure that precautions against mosquito bites are taken including using an EPA registered insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants when outside, and staying in a room with air conditioning or screens. EPA registered insect repellents are safe for use by pregnant women, when used according to the product label.

No transmission of Zika virus infection has occurred in Princeton, NJ or in any other state, but cases have occurred in the U.S. from returning travelers. Aedes mosquitos, the species of mosquito that can transmit Zika, are present in New Jersey. At this time, local transmission is unlikely. It would require an Aedes mosquito biting a Zika infected person and then biting others.

People can reduce the spread of Aedes mosquitos by eliminating sites around their homes where mosquitos may breed by getting rid of containers and any other sites where water may collect and mosquitos lay their eggs.

As of January 28, 2016, twenty-four countries or territories are reporting transmission of Zika virus, including Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Saint Martin, Suriname, U.S. Virgin Islands, Venezuela, Samoa (Oceania/Pacific Islands) and Cape Verde (Africa). Updates of affected countries and traveler health notices are posted on the CDC website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/>.

For more information on the Zika virus visit:

- Your health care provider
- NJ Department of Health: <http://www.nj.gov/health>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>
- CDC Travel Health Notices: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

The Princeton Health Department is committed to protecting and improving the health of all visitors and residents. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Princeton Health Department oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. To learn more about the Princeton Health Department and the work they do, visit www.princetonnj.gov