

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ZIKA VIRUS**

Zika virus disease is a disease caused by the Zika virus, which is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is usually mild, with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. People usually do not become ill enough to visit a doctor. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected. Zika virus may also cause Guillain Barre Syndrome in infected individuals, involving tingling in the extremities and progression to muscle weakness and occasionally paralysis.

Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect called microcephaly, as well as other severe fetal brain defects. Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby is born with a much smaller head than normal, because the brain has not developed properly during pregnancy. The baby may suffer from a number of physical and cognitive problems, ranging from mild to severe, including a decreased ability to learn and function. Understanding of the Zika virus and its effect on infected pregnant women and their babies is still evolving. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is the primary source for the most current information.

In May 2015, a world health alert was issued regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infection in Brazil. Local transmission has been reported in many countries and territories since the first alert. The CDC lists the countries and territories reporting active Zika transmission. Please see <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html> and the CDC Traveler's Health site (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>) for the most updated travel information notices. Currently, the majority of these regions are in Central and South America. However, specific areas where Zika is spreading are often difficult to determine and are likely to change over time.

Zika can also be transmitted sexually through semen from infected males to their partners. All reported cases of sexual transmission occurred shortly before onset or shortly after resolution of a symptomatic illness consistent with Zika virus disease. It is not known whether infected men who never develop symptoms can transmit Zika virus to their partners. Sexual transmission of Zika virus from infected women to their partners has not been reported yet. Sexual transmission of many infections, including those caused by other viruses, is reduced by consistent and correct use of latex condoms.

Testing for Zika virus is now available through Quest and Lab Corp. However, testing is not universally covered by insurance. To date, there are no vaccines to protect against Zika, and there is no specific treatment.

The CDC has provided guidance for pregnant women and women considering becoming pregnant. Please see <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/specific-groups.html>. The CDC has also issued guidelines for health-care providers in the United States caring for pregnant women and women of reproductive age. Please also see <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/qa-pregnant-women.html>. As more information becomes available about the Zika virus, these guidelines will be updated. In addition, the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) has issued

guidelines based on the CDC and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published guidelines. CARE follows these guidelines and strongly encourages you to continually monitor the CDC guidance as you attempt to become pregnant or become pregnant.

While there have been no reported cases of Zika virus transmission through assisted reproductive technology (ART), transmission through donated gametes (eggs and sperm) and embryos is theoretically possible. The FDA has issued guidelines for procedures using donated tissue, including protocols for sperm donation. CARE Fertility follows the FDA’s guidance for tissue donation.

**Based on the information available regarding the risk to patients and the unborn child, the physicians at CARE strongly advise you and your partner NOT to travel to areas with active Zika transmission while attempting pregnancy. Failure to comply with this advice may result in delay of your treatment as a patient at CARE.**

If you or your partner have recently lived in or traveled to an area reporting local Zika transmission, or have had sex without a condom with a man infected with Zika, and are interested in attempting pregnancy, CARE will recommend that you wait to attempt pregnancy according to the time frames currently suggested by the CDC and ASRM as outlined in the included table.

**CDC’s suggested time frame to wait before trying to get pregnant:**

<b>Possible exposure via recent travel or sex without a condom with a partner infected with Zika</b>		
	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
	Wait at least 8 weeks after symptoms start or last possible exposure	Wait at least 6 months after symptoms start or last possible exposure
<b>People living in or frequently traveling to areas with Zika</b>		
	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
<b>Positive Zika test</b>	Wait at least 8 weeks after symptoms start	Wait at least 6 months after symptoms start
<b>No testing performed or negative test</b>	Talk with doctor or healthcare provider	Talk with doctor or healthcare provider

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have read and understand the risks to both me and, if pregnant, to my resulting child of being infected with the Zika virus. I have been provided with the links to the CDC for up-to-date information on the virus and areas affected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

## **WAIVER**

I agree that neither CARE, nor any of its physicians, staff or anyone acting on its behalf, will be liable at law or in equity, nor will I bring any action or claim, or encourage the bringing or investigation of any action or claim against CARE or any of its physicians, staff, or anyone acting on its behalf, in connection with proceeding with infertility treatment while either I or my partner may be infected with the Zika virus. I further agree not to sue and agree to release, hold harmless and indemnify CARE, its trustees, directors, officers, employees, servants, agents, affiliates, management companies and representatives for any and all damages, expenses, causes of action, suits and claims, made or initiated with respect to my decision to attempt pregnancy when I or my partner has been exposed to the Zika virus, including, but not limited to, any subsequent developments, both known and presently unknown that: 1) affect or may affect me or any resulting child or children, including microcephaly, or 2) relate to any claimed emotional injury or cost arising out of my decision to proceed with treatment at CARE.