

Info-MADO

Newsletter of the Nunavik Department of Public Health on Notifiable diseases

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REGIE REGIONALE DE LA NUNAVIK REGIONAL
DES MALADIES INFECTIEUSES AND OF PUBLIC
SOCIAUX DU NUNAVIK AND SOCIAL SERVICES

CALL FOR VIGILANCE: ZIKA VIRUS

Prepared by the Infectious Diseases team
From MSSS communications,
Nunavik Department of Public Health

CONTEXT

As of January 29, we have been informed of one confirmed case of the Zika virus declared to the MSSS. The individual apparently acquired the infection during a trip to Haiti. Between November 27 and January 20, the *Laboratoire de santé publique du Québec (LSPQ)* [Québec Public Health Laboratory] received some 20 requests for tests for the Zika virus.

Zika is a viral disease transmitted through the bites of infected mosquitoes that can also transmit other viruses, notably dengue and Chikungunya. According to the entomological monitoring data, those two vectors are not currently present in Québec. Consequently, the risk for a Québec resident of acquiring the disease is linked to travel to a region where the Zika virus is found.

Signs and symptoms

The majority of individuals infected by the virus (75-80%) do not develop symptoms. When the symptoms manifest, they are generally benign:

- low to moderate fever;
- non-purulent conjunctivitis;
- headache;
- maculopapular skin eruptions;
- muscle or joint pain;
- weakness.

Most individuals recover fully without complications, and hospitalization rates are low.

In rare cases, neurological complications (Guillain-Barre syndrome) have been reported among infected individuals. Microcephaly has also been observed in the fetuses and newborns of women who were infected by the virus during pregnancy. It is possible that the Zika virus is the underlying cause; however, the causal link has not been formally established.

This infection is not reportable (*MADO*) in Québec; only viral encephalitis spread by arthropods is reportable.

Transmission

The principal mode of transmission is through the bite of an infected mosquito. Infected individuals are not contagious, but there are reports of cases of sexual transmission and transmission through blood infusion. The risk of an individual transmitting the virus through blood, organ or tissue donation is higher during the first week of the infection, when the viremia is at a peak.

Incubation

The Zika virus' incubation period is 3 to 12 days. The symptoms normally last from two to seven days.

Recommendations for pregnant women and newborns

The *MSSS* Web site, under the section for health professionals (zoonosis/Zika), lists recommendations for health professionals formulated by clinicians of Ste-Justine Hospital concerning the Zika virus in pregnant women and newborns. Those recommendations were the object of consultation with the *Collège des médecins du Québec* and the *Association des gynécologues obstétriciens du Québec*: <http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/>

SECTION FOR PHYSICIANS

Clinical and diagnostic details for the Zika virus

Further, it is important to remember to enter the following information in your laboratory applications (to avoid delays in requested tests):

- date of onset of symptoms;
- symptoms;
- date of trip;
- trip destination.

Some Web sites for further information

MSSS, Portail Santé, Se protéger des piqûres de moustiques

<http://www.santé.gouv.qc.ca/conseils-et-prevention/se-proteger-des-piqures-de-moustiques/>

INSPQ, Actualité santé voyage

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/pdf/bulletins/santevoyage/ActualitesSanteVoyage-Vol17No1.pdf>

INSPQ, Informations sur le Zika

<https://www.inspq.qc.ca/zoonoses/maladies-infectieuses-transmises-par-les-moustiques>

Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/phn-asp/2016/zika-eng.php>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika>

Pan American Health Organization (OPS), list of affected countries

<http://www.paho.org/hq/>