



The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared an international public health emergency over the explosive spread of the mosquito-borne Zika virus. It was announced after WHO's emergency meeting of independent experts headed by WHO Director-General Margaret Chan. The meeting was convened in Geneva, Switzerland to assess the outbreak of the virus which is linked to birth defects in the Americas.

So far, 23 countries including Brazil, Bolivia, Barbados and Columbia have reported Zika Virus disease. Among them Brazil is the country worst hit by the outbreak and it is investigating 3,670 suspected cases of microcephaly in babies linked to the Zika virus. No case of the virus has been reported in India.

#### Key facts

- Deceleration of international emergency means that there is underscoring seriousness of outbreak and needs a coordinated global response and greater attention to stop it.
- WHO has predicted that around four million people may be infected with Zika virus in the Americas

### **Countries currently affected by Zika Virus:**

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### **Zika in the Pacific :**

The Aedes mosquitoes that are able to spread these viruses are not normally found in New Zealand. Since 2014, there has been an increase in confirmed cases of dengue, chikungunya and Zika virus infection in many Pacific Islands including the

- Cook Islands,
- French Polynesia,
- Fiji,
- New Caledonia,
- Samoa,
- Tonga and
- Vanuatu.



## **Staff Awareness Notice**



### **The Zika Virus**

# THE ZIKA VIRUS

## What is Zika Virus?

Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. It is close cousin of other vector-borne diseases like Dengue, Chikungunya and Yellow Fever transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes. The virus was first identified in 1947 in Uganda and its name has been derived from Zika Forest.

## Transmission:

Zika virus is not contagious but it is mainly transmitted by daytime-active *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes after it bites someone infected with the virus and transmit it by biting another human.

## Most common symptoms:

Headache, muscle and joint pain, mild fever, rash, pinkeye and inflammation of the underside of the eyelid. Zika causes neurological disorders (diseases of the brain, spine and the nerves that connect them) and foetal deformation known as Microcephaly where infants are born with abnormally smaller heads that can cause brain damage

## Treatment and Prevention:

There is no specific treatment, vaccine or medicine currently available to treat Zika. Employees traveling out of the country on business/personal reasons can protect themselves by protection against mosquito bites.

Further preventative measures include:-

- Clearing stagnant water where mosquitoes breed.
- Turnover, cover, or throw out items that hold water, such as tires, buckets, gutters, drums, tin cans, flowerpots, or trash containers.
- Filing cabinets, boxes and other storage areas with poor lighting must be flushed out with a broom or aired out to remove mosquitoes hiding within.
- Always carry in your bags mosquito repellent and use when out - doors.
- Avoid/prevent further mosquito bites.
- Stay and sleep in screened-in or air-conditioned rooms.
- Wear long sleeves and pants, and use insect repellents when outdoors. Most insect repellents would be good, but please seek advice if in doubt. Pregnant women should seek medical advice on appropriate insect repellents to use.
- Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents). You can buy pre-treated clothing and gear or treat them yourself.

*Please see your doctor or nurse*

***IMMEDIATELY if you develop a fever with a rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Tell your Doctor or nurse about your travel if you have travelled lately.***

*For further information call Air Niugini Clinic on Extension 3510.*