

Florida particularly at risk

With an abundant, almost year-round population of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes (the bloodsuckers capable of transmitting the illness) and a high volume of travelers from [Zika-prone](#) countries, the Sunshine State is especially vulnerable to an outbreak. None of the cases in Florida and elsewhere in the continental U.S. have been transmitted locally by mosquitoes and only a handful are confirmed transmissions by sex. The CDC began to issue weekly counts of cases by state in early February:

Note: States with lower populations have higher margins of error due to small sample size.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([updates weekly](#)), U.S. Census

Bureau [population](#) estimates.

Miami-Dade County hit hard

The Florida Department of Health confirmed the state's first three cases of Zika virus on Jan. 18. Two were in Miami-Dade and one was in Hillsborough County (the Tampa area). The health department began issuing close-to-daily counts of CDC-confirmed, travel-related Zika cases by county in early February. The counties for cases involving pregnant women are not specified by the health department.

Source: Florida Department of Health ([updates most weekdays](#)).

Severe birth defects

The CDC has confirmed Zika virus [causes microcephaly](#) and other severe fetal brain defects. It can be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus during pregnancy or at delivery. The agency advises women who are pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant to not travel to [Zika-affected](#) areas.

If a pregnant woman's male partner has been to such an area, the couple should abstain from sex or use condoms during the pregnancy. Currently, the CDC does not believe there is risk for the [future pregnancies](#) of a woman who has Zika once the virus clears from her blood.

Mosquito control is key

Zika is primarily spread to people through the bite of an infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquito — the same kind that causes dengue and chikungunya viruses.

To keep mosquitoes from multiplying, the Florida Department of Health recommends draining standing water (no matter how seemingly small the amount) once or twice a week. Garbage cans, bird baths, pool covers, etc... are all prime breeding grounds. Miami-Dade County residents can request a mosquito inspection or report a mosquito nuisance by calling **3-1-1**.

The department also recommends using screens to cover doors and windows. To avoid bites while outside, cover skin with clothing and use mosquito repellent. Those with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are effective. Florida has a Zika Virus Information Hotline managed by the Department of Health that can be reached at **1-855-622-6735**.

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<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/health-care/article66790817.html>