



# North Central District Health Department

- Enfield—31 North Main Street, Enfield, CT 06082 \* (860) 745-0383 Fax (860) 745-3188
- Vernon—375 Hartford Turnpike, Room 120, Vernon, CT 06066 \* (860) 872-1501 Fax (860) 872 1531
- Windham—Town Hall, 979 Main Street, Willimantic, CT 06226 \* (860) 465-3033 Fax (860) 465-3034
- Stafford—Town Hall, 1 Main Street, Stafford Springs, CT 06076 \* (860) 684-5609 Fax (860) 684-1768

Patrice A. Sulik, MPH, R.S.  
Director of Health

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**CONTACT: PATRICE SULIK, 860-745-0383**

## **Confirmed Cases of Zika Virus Continue To Be Identified** *NCDHD Encourages Residents to Take Precautions*

Cases of Zika virus have been confirmed in the United States and the number of people infected continues to increase. According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, there have been 45 confirmed cases in Connecticut residents since active surveillance was implemented in February 2016. However, no locally acquired cases have been reported. The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) encourages all residents to take precautions to prevent infection.

“Connecticut remains vigilant in their efforts to prevent transmission of Zika virus,” said Patrice Sulik, NCDHD Director of Health. “NCDHD continues to work with local partners to actively monitor the mosquito population and the transmission rates of the virus.”

Zika virus is transmitted primarily by *Aedes aegypti*, the mosquitos that are aggressive daytime biters. They can also bite at night and can be found in buildings. They become infected when they bite a person already infected with the virus and can then transmit the virus when they bite another person. *Aedes aegypti* is not found in Connecticut but a related species, *Aedes albopictus*, has been identified in the southwestern area of the state and it is also considered capable of transmission of the Zika virus.

NCDHD board member, Ben Rodriguez of Suffield, said, “Personal protection measures are the best way to prevent transmission of the virus. Residents should look to remove standing water on their property as best they could and dress appropriately when outdoors.”

The best prevention is to avoid mosquito bites and to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

Mosquitoes do not need a lot of water to breed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the following actions to be taken to prevent transmission of the virus:

- Control mosquitoes inside and outside your home.
  - Use screens on windows and doors. Repair holes in screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
  - Use air conditioning when available.
  - Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over or throw out items that hold water such as tires, buckets, planters, toys, pools, birdbaths, flowerpots, or trash containers. Check inside and outside your home.
- Dress appropriately. Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants, when appropriate. Loose fitting, light colors work best.
- Protect your baby or child: Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs. Cover crib, stroller, and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
- Treat clothing and gear: Treat clothing with permethrin based products. Follow the product instructions. Do not use permethrin products directly on skin.

There is no vaccine for Zika virus. The best prevention is to avoid mosquito bites and to prevent mosquitoes from breeding. Those infected with Zika infections have relatively mild illnesses that are

rarely fatal. Symptoms include fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). Symptoms can last for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Many people may not realize they have been infected. An increase in birth defects among infants born to women infected during pregnancy is associated with the virus, as well as other severe fatal brain defects.

For more information on Zika virus visit the Connecticut Department of Public Health at <http://www.ct.gov/dph> or the CDC at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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### **About NCDHD**

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) serves the communities of Enfield, East Windsor, Ellington, Stafford, Suffield, Vernon, Windham, and Windsor Locks. NCDHD is a full-time public health department with a full-time staff funded by its member towns and an annual per capita grant from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. NCDHD provides professional public health services in the areas of health education and disease prevention, environmental health and emergency preparedness. The mission of NCDHD is to prevent disease, injury, and disability by promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public and our environment.

For more information about NCDHD visit [www.ncdhd.org](http://www.ncdhd.org).