Zika virus disease - Get the fact

**What is Zika, in brief?**
Zika virus is a viral disease that is transmitted through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito, primarily *Aedes aegypti*. These mosquitoes are present in all countries in the SEA region. As of 27 January 2016, 22 countries and territories in the Americas were reporting local transmission of Zika virus, including reported outbreaks in 6 countries, Brazil, Columbia, Cape Verde, El Salvador, Martinique and Panama. In the past years, there were confirmed cases of Zika virus in India, Indonesia and Thailand. During 2012-2014, seven cases of acute zika infection were reported in Thai residents across the country. In January 2016, 3 cases of Zika reported by Maldives, Thailand and Taiwan.

**How do people get Zika virus?**
Zika virus is transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito from the Aedes genus, mainly *Aedes aegypti* in tropical regions. This is the same mosquito transmitting dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever.

**How do we know we get Zika?**
Only laboratory test could confirm whether a person is infected by Zika or not. The test includes virus isolation from blood samples and a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test.

**What are the treatments?**
At the moment, there is no specific medicine treating Zika virus infection or vaccine to prevent a person from getting the disease. Doctors commonly use medicine for common pain and fever, whereas patients need to rest and drink plenty of water.

**How should we be aware of?**
Neurological disorders and birth defect were observed during the outbreak. Although the causal relationship of those two has not been established, it is strongly suspected.

**What does WHO do?**
WHO has done, is doing and will be doing activities to:
- Define and prioritise research into Zika virus disease.
- Enhance surveillance of Zika virus and potential complications.
- Strengthen capacity in risk communication.
- Provide training on clinical management, diagnosis and vector control.
- Strengthen the capacity of laboratories to detect the virus.
- Support health authorities to implement vector control strategies aimed at reducing *Aedes* mosquito populations.
- Prepare recommendations for clinical care and follow-up of patients with Zika.


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