



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Zika Virus Disease

In the last two weeks, there has been considerable publicity regarding Zika Virus Disease or 'Zika'.

Zika is a disease caused by a virus transmitted to humans by a particular type of mosquito called *Aedes aegypti*. Neither the virus nor the mosquito is native to Gibraltar. Zika has never been reported in Gibraltar.

However, large outbreaks have been reported from several South American countries since early 2015 and there is concern that outbreaks will spread to other countries.

Zika illness is usually mild and over 80% of those infected have no symptoms. However, in northern Brazil a large number of pregnant women have been reported to have stillbirths or babies born with birth defects, which scientists think might be associated with Zika infection. This is currently the most serious aspect of this disease.

Zika cannot be spread from person to person directly. There is no vaccine to prevent Zika or medicines to stop the disease.

**The main public health message is that women who are pregnant or are trying to become pregnant should avoid or consider postponing travel to the areas affected with Zika.**

If travel to a Zika affected country is unavoidable, women are advised to take the following steps:

- Discuss travel plans with your doctor before travel.
- If you are pregnant, inform the ante-natal clinic before travel.
- During your stay, take special care to avoid mosquito bites.
- On your return, report any symptoms promptly for up to 14 days after return