

SPRING UPDATE 2016

ZIKA VIRUS EDITION

The biggest public health story in the news this year has been the Zika Virus. It's not unusual to read something new every day. Sorting through the facts that relate to residents in New Hampshire is difficult since this virus impacts millions of people across the globe so the message may be tailored to the majority of people living in tropical regions. Zika Virus has been tied to microcephaly, Guillian-Barre Syndrome, blindness, deafness, and other medical conditions.

- If Zika was discovered in 1947, then why is it causing so many problems today?
There are several conditions that have come together to create the perfect storm:

Climate change

El Nino

Overcrowded slums

Virus mutation

Sexual transmission

- Here are the facts as we know them today and how they relate to NH:

Currently, two species of mosquitoes have been identified as vectors of Zika Virus. Neither mosquito has been found in NH. *Aedes aegypti* never will survive this far north since it's a tropical mosquito. The other species of mosquito is moving northward and will arrive in NH if it's not already here. That mosquito is *Aedes albopictus*. It has been found in CT and MA so it's mere hours away. It's a matter of time before we find it in NH. We've known that for over a decade.

- Will we see an outbreak in NH?

It's highly unlikely we'll see an outbreak in NH. We may see a few isolated cases if any other species of mosquito is found transmitting Zika. Or when a traveler arrives home infected with the Zika Virus and infects their partner through unprotected sex.

- What is my town doing to prepare for Zika?

First, we're arming ourselves with information. There are daily reports and updates from CDC and other agencies or universities from around the world. The mosquito control program in your town will be looking for *Aedes albopictus*. By July 1st, traps will be set to capture live adult mosquitoes which are sent to the State Lab in Concord for disease testing. This testing will occur until mid-October. Currently, mosquito control crews are treating stagnant water to eliminate mosquito larvae or dumping out water found in containers thereby eliminating the breeding source for mosquitoes. We share information with our neighboring states, especially Massachusetts where *Aedes albopictus* has been found.

- What should homeowners do?

Right now the message is the same as for West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Make sure your screens fit tight and are free of holes. Dump out standing water collecting in containers in your yard. That can be tires, wheelbarrows, tarps, kiddie pools, dog bowls, swimming pool covers, flower pots, bird baths. It's okay to leave water in bird baths or dog bowls. Make sure to change the water every few days. Wear repellent when mosquitoes are biting. Keep informed.

Check out our web site www.DragonMosquito.com for more information. Click on Helpful links; scroll down to the bottom of that list; Click on Zika Virus. You'll find Zika news on our Face Book page and our Twitter page.

Respectfully submitted,
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