

As lawncare professionals, your customers look to you to provide reliable and helpful information on a wide variety of topics ranging from aeration to tick control to help ensure the safety of their family, community, and environment. With the recent surge of Zika virus, you will likely field several Zika-related questions.

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) created this resource to better help you and your colleagues explain Zika and our county's mosquito control efforts to your customers. This information will help educate customers and explain the role they can play in maintaining the health of our communities.

What is Zika virus and what should I look out for?

The Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus that is spread primarily through the bite of an infected mosquito. The *Aedes albopictus* and the *Aedes aegypti* transmit the Zika virus. These are the same mosquitos that carry Chikungunya and spread dengue. For more information about these mosquito types and habits, check out the following resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://1.usa.gov/21RFxdS>
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control - <http://bit.ly/1jtZY00>
- World Health Organization - <http://bit.ly/1ntNrNU>

For information about Zika signs and symptoms, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/symptoms/>. If you suspect you have contracted the virus, we recommend contacting your primary care physician or your state's health department.

How is Zika contracted?

Mosquito bites remain the primary way Zika is transmitted, but sexual transmission is possible. Zika symptoms are usually mild and include fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes; however, most people with Zika don't get sick.

Should I be concerned?

The Zika virus has been found in mosquitoes in Florida and the carriers are located throughout the country. Maps of both *Aedes* species' existence in the U.S. are available from [CDC](#).

The mosquito control districts in the U.S. have effectively managed dengue, West Nile fever, and Chikungunya, demonstrating the effectiveness of our integrated mosquito management approach. Controlling *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* involves:

- 1) *Public education and community involvement.* Mosquito control districts work to inform residents about how to reduce breeding sites on and around their property. Cooperation from residents is essential to a successful control program.
- 2) *Source reduction.* Removal of breeding sites is one of the most impactful ways to control the population.
- 3) *Larvae and adult population control.* Surveying areas for existing mosquitoes in the developing or adult stages allows mosquito control officials to create and recommend the best approach for the specific area and situation.

How to prevent Zika?

To prevent Zika, we recommend using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves/pants, and treating clothing with permethrin or DEET. Insect repellents with higher percentages of active ingredients provide longer protection. Sleeping indoors is another way to avoid contracting the virus.

The *Aedes* species that carry Zika are found in urban and suburban areas. As a result, we can focus on controlling contained breeding sites (standing water). Try to remove or drain standing water, such as buckets, birdbaths, pet bowls, flowerpot saucers, or plastic wading pools, which attract mosquitoes and allow them to breed.

To learn more about the Zika virus and ways to control and prevent mosquitoes, visit www.debugthemyths.com/zika and follow [@DebugTheMyths](#) on Twitter.