



**For Immediate Release**

**Date: March 14, 2017**

**Contact:** Michele Bever, PhD, MPH, Executive Director, SHDHD  
402-462-6211 or toll free at 1-877-238-7595

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**Mosquito Protection Encouraged for Spring Break Travelers**

South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) encourages students and others traveling for spring break to protect themselves from mosquitoes. "If your destination is an area where mosquitoes carry Zika, Dengue, Chikungunya or other viruses, then you should take extra precautions to protect yourself from mosquito bites," said Michele Bever, executive director for SHDHD.

Bever also said that Zika testing is available for travelers returning from designated Zika areas who have symptoms and also for those without symptoms. However, "male and female travelers considering having children in the near future, or who are already pregnant, should postpone travel to Zika areas," she said.

SHDHD is the local resource in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties for the most current information about Zika virus or testing. Please visit the website: [www.southheartlandhealth.org](http://www.southheartlandhealth.org) or call 402-462-6211 (toll free 1-877-238-7595) for assistance.

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*In case you missed it.... Please see News Release and Sound Bites from DHHS, below:*

**From:** Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services [<mailto:dhhs@service.govdelivery.com>]

**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2017 1:11 PM

**To:** Bucco-White, Leah <[Leah.Bucco-White@nebraska.gov](mailto:Leah.Bucco-White@nebraska.gov)>

**Subject:** DHHS News Release: Students Traveling for Spring Break Encouraged to Protect Themselves from Mosquitoes



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 10, 2017

**CONTACT**

Leah Bucco-White, Communications and Legislative Services, 402-471-9356  
[leah.bucco-white@nebraska.gov](mailto:leah.bucco-white@nebraska.gov)

**Students Traveling for Spring Break Encouraged to  
Protect Themselves from Mosquitoes**

**Note: Sound bites on this topic are available at [www.dhhs.ne.gov/audio](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/audio)**

**Lincoln** – The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is reminding students traveling during spring break to prevent mosquito bites if they're going to areas or countries with active Zika virus. Zika has spread to more than 60 countries and territories worldwide including some popular spring break destinations such as Mexico and Puerto Rico. In the United States, local transmission of Zika has been reported in Florida and Texas. Additionally, other mosquito-borne illnesses like dengue and chikungunya are in many of the same areas as Zika.

"The first step is to find out if your spring break destination is a Zika-affected area and if it is, be sure to take precautions to protect yourself from mosquitoes," said Dr. Tom Safranek, State Epidemiologist for DHHS. "Travelers who are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant in the near future should postpone their trip unless absolutely necessary."

Proper mosquito prevention includes:

- Using and EPA-registered insect repellent properly
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants

and windows

For the latest list of travel advisories, visit <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>. For more information about what to do before, during and after a trip to a Zika-affected area, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/plan-for-travel.html>.

So far, there have been 4,813 travel-related cases of Zika virus and 221 locally acquired in the United States. In Nebraska, 14 travel-related cases have been identified. The primary mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*) that transmits Zika, dengue, and chikungunya viruses is found in tropical areas and the southern U.S., but is not established in Nebraska.

Zika virus is primarily spread to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. There is no evidence that the virus can be spread from person to person through casual contact, but it can be spread through sexual contact. Eighty percent of people infected with the Zika virus do not have any symptoms. When symptoms occur, they are often mild, lasting from several days to a week, and include fever, rash, joint and muscle pain, conjunctivitis (red eyes) and headache. While severe disease requiring hospitalization can occur it's uncommon. Zika can also cause birth defects such as microcephaly in babies of mothers who were infected with the Zika virus while pregnant. Microcephaly is a rare condition where a baby's head is smaller than expected.

For more information about Zika virus, visit <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/zika> or <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.

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