



# *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in Oklahoma

Due to increasing public health concerns surrounding Zika virus, the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) began a collaborative mosquito surveillance project with Oklahoma State University (OSU) entomologists to gain a better understanding of the presence of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in six different Oklahoma communities. This fact sheet outlines the key questions and answers Oklahomans may have regarding the recent announcement (refer to press release on July 28, 2016 titled “*Joint Surveillance Project Discovers Aedes Aegypti Mosquitoes in Southwest Oklahoma*”) that a small number of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes were identified in Altus, Oklahoma.

## **Why are the OSDH and OSU collecting mosquitoes in Oklahoma?**

The OSDH is partnering with OSU to determine the presence of *Aedes aegypti* in Oklahoma. *Aedes aegypti* is the main species of mosquito known to transmit the Zika virus in South and Central American and the Caribbean where local transmission of Zika virus is occurring. In previous years, *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes were rarely found during mosquito trapping conducted in Oklahoma and Comanche counties for West Nile virus. However, there is limited information about the current presence and distribution of this species of mosquito in other communities. As a part of the public health response to the Zika virus, this project increases mosquito trapping to six additional communities.

## **Where in Oklahoma are OSDH and OSU collecting mosquitoes?**

This mosquito trapping project is occurring in six Oklahoma communities, including four that are nearby military bases. Communities with military bases were included because of the potential for *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes to be brought in with incoming military supplies. This project is in addition to mosquito trapping and testing already conducted by Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Comanche County for West Nile virus surveillance.

## **Is Oklahoma experiencing local transmission of Zika?**

No. To date, all cases of Zika virus among Oklahoma residents have occurred among persons that were exposed during travel to other countries where local transmission of Zika virus is occurring.

## **What does identification of *Aedes aegypti* mean to our risk of Zika transmission?**

The presence of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in Altus does not mean that community or other communities in Oklahoma will have local occurrence of cases of Zika virus. This mosquito trapping project helps us gain a better understanding of the potential locations and density of this mosquito; however, for local transmission of Zika virus to be possible, mosquitoes must first pick up the virus from a person recently infected with the virus to be able to spread it to others.

## **If I think I found an *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, can I submit it for identification and testing?**

No. The health department is not accepting mosquitoes from the general public for species identification or testing for Zika.

## **Where can I look up additional information about the Zika virus?**

Information about the Zika virus is located on the OSDH website at [https://www.ok.gov/health/Disease\\_Prevention\\_Preparedness/Acute\\_Disease\\_Service/Disease\\_Information/Zika\\_Virus.html](https://www.ok.gov/health/Disease_Prevention_Preparedness/Acute_Disease_Service/Disease_Information/Zika_Virus.html). The OSDH Zika virus website contains fact sheets for the public, information for healthcare providers, and the number of Zika virus cases in Oklahoma, which is updated every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. You can also find additional information about the Zika virus on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>.

**I was recently bitten by a mosquito here in Oklahoma. Do I need to be tested for Zika?**

No. At this time there is no local transmission of Zika virus here in Oklahoma, so there would be no risk for Zika virus infection.

**What should I do if I was bitten by a mosquito in Oklahoma and developed symptoms like a fever and a rash?**

If you recently had a mosquito bite and then developed symptoms like fever, headache, body aches, or a rash, contact your healthcare provider. Although there is currently no local transmission of the Zika virus, it's important for Oklahomans to remember that West Nile virus is an established mosquito-borne disease in Oklahoma causing illnesses, hospitalizations, and even death of some persons, especially those over the age of 50 years. For more information about West Nile virus, visit the OSDH website at [https://www.ok.gov/health/Disease\\_Prevention\\_Preparedness/Acute\\_Disease\\_Service/Disease\\_Information/Tickborne\\_and\\_Mosquitoborne\\_Diseases/West\\_Nile\\_Virus/](https://www.ok.gov/health/Disease_Prevention_Preparedness/Acute_Disease_Service/Disease_Information/Tickborne_and_Mosquitoborne_Diseases/West_Nile_Virus/).

**I saw that *Aedes aegypti* means yellow fever. Does this mean there is yellow fever in Oklahoma?**

No. *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes can carry yellow fever as well as other diseases like chikungunya and Dengue. However, none of these diseases are locally transmitted here in Oklahoma.

**What is the OSDH doing to identify cases of Zika virus in Oklahoma?**

Zika virus is a reportable disease in Oklahoma. The OSDH Acute Disease Service works with clinicians to conduct testing for patients that are experiencing symptoms suggestive of Zika virus and other mosquito-borne diseases via testing conducted by the OSDH Public Health Laboratory. Persons confirmed to have illness due to the Zika virus are interviewed to determine their likely source of exposure, such as international travel to a country experiencing local transmission of Zika virus, and to recommend measures to prevent mosquito bites during the time the Zika virus is still in their system, and appropriate precautions to protect others. In addition to transmission from a mosquito bite, Zika virus may be passed from an infected mother to her unborn baby or during delivery, through sexual transmission, and possibly through blood transfusion.