

ZIKA: What We Have Learned



When the Zika outbreak began, there were many unknowns. Since then, we have learned a lot about Zika virus infection during pregnancy because of the rich data that health departments collected. CDC worked with health departments to set up systems to collect information about people exposed to Zika during pregnancy and their babies after birth. This helped us to answer many questions about how Zika virus can affect babies.

Here are questions that these data helped us answer:

- ◆ **How does Zika affect pregnancies?** Certain types of birth defects can happen from Zika virus infection during pregnancy. Several brain and eye defects were more commonly reported.
- ◆ **How often do babies have birth defects if their mothers had Zika while pregnant?** About 5% of babies born to women with Zika while pregnant had Zika-associated birth defects. Additionally, some babies exposed to Zika during pregnancy might look healthy at birth but can develop long-term health problems as they grow.
- ◆ **When during pregnancy does Zika cause harm to the baby?** Infection during early pregnancy may be more likely to cause birth defects, but we have seen babies with birth defects born to women infected with Zika anytime during pregnancy.
- ◆ **If a woman has Zika symptoms, is her baby more likely to have birth defects?** We found a similar frequency of birth defects between mothers with and without Zika symptoms.
- ◆ **Are babies getting the care they need?** Many babies exposed to Zika in pregnancy were not reported receiving the recommended examinations (physical and developmental exam, brain imaging, hearing test, eye exam) during their first year of life.



While we have learned a lot about how Zika affects pregnancies, there is still more to do.

CDC will collect information on some babies affected by Zika up until the children are age 5 years. We want to learn more about any other brain or developmental problems that children who were exposed to Zika virus during pregnancy might experience.

These efforts have helped us learn more about Zika and pregnancy. This information is also used to help inform the health care needs of families affected by Zika. For more information about Zika and pregnancy, visit [CDC's webpage](#).



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities