Zika virus summary

The Zika virus is receiving increased attention by the media due to its recent spread primarily in Central and South America. This virus has been known to exist since 1947. Approximately 80% of persons that become infected with the Zika virus do not experience illness or symptoms. In persons that express symptoms, the illness is relatively mild with fever, rash, fatigue and/or joint pain lasting several days. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon. There is a possibility of microcephaly in children when a woman is exposed to the virus during pregnancy. There is currently no vaccine to prevent the disease, and research of the current outbreak and understanding this disease is evolving.

The Zika virus is primarily transmitted to humans through mosquito bites, but it is reported to have been transmitted through sexual contact and blood transfusions as well. The risk to persons in Western Pennsylvania is low at this time. Those who travel to the impacted areas, such as Central America and South America, and even some counties in Florida, are advised to understand the risks of Zika and take into account preventative measures before traveling. Members of the Pitt community should be aware of resources available to help keep travelers safe and up to date about this evolving health threat. Information is found on the Pitt study abroad, travel registry, and emergency web sites and of course the CDC website-

http://www.abroad.pitt.edu/zika

http://emergency.pitt.edu/potential-hazards/disease