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## ACIPC URGES VIGILANCE IN FACE OF ZIKA VIRUS THREAT

The Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control is supporting advice that pregnant women should reconsider travel to areas where the Zika virus is endemic.

College President, Professor Ramon Shaban, says while the vast majority of Zika-infected patients have no symptoms, there are concerns about the effect of the virus on pregnant women and their fetuses.

“With this in mind, pregnant women should avoid travelling to areas where Zika is endemic, particularly while there is no known specific treatment or vaccine available for the disease.

“Any pregnant woman concerned about the risk of Zika transmission and infection should consult their obstetrician.

“For those travelling through Zika endemic areas it is important they take the usual steps to reduce the risk of getting bitten by mosquitoes such as using repellent and wearing light coloured clothing that covers the body,” Professor Shaban said.

The World Health Organisation has released a global alert regarding Zika and the high likelihood of the disease spreading.

Despite the spread of the disease the overwhelming majority of those infected with Zika experience no symptoms, and those that do, tend to have a mild reaction.

Zika virus is transmitted by the Aedes mosquito. There are currently no reported cases in Australia and those returning from overseas should see a doctor if they feel unwell.

Despite reports in Brazil of microcephaly in babies of mothers infected with Zika virus, more study is needed before a causal link is known. The limited data available suggests that pregnant women are no more susceptible to contracting the disease than the general population. At this time there is no evidence that Zika virus infection poses a risk to future pregnancies. The virus remains in the blood for about one week and will not cause further infection after it has cleared from the blood.

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For further information and interviews contact Professor Ramon Shaban on 0478 312 668.

### About ACIPC

The ACIPC is the peak body for Infection Prevention and Control in the Australasian region. The college supports infection prevention and control professionals by providing them with support, networking, knowledge and up to date information relevant to their area of practice. [www.acipc.org.au](http://www.acipc.org.au)