

HOW IS ZIKA VIRUS TRANSMITTED?

Zika virus is transmitted to people through the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito. But there are other, although rare, modes of transmission.

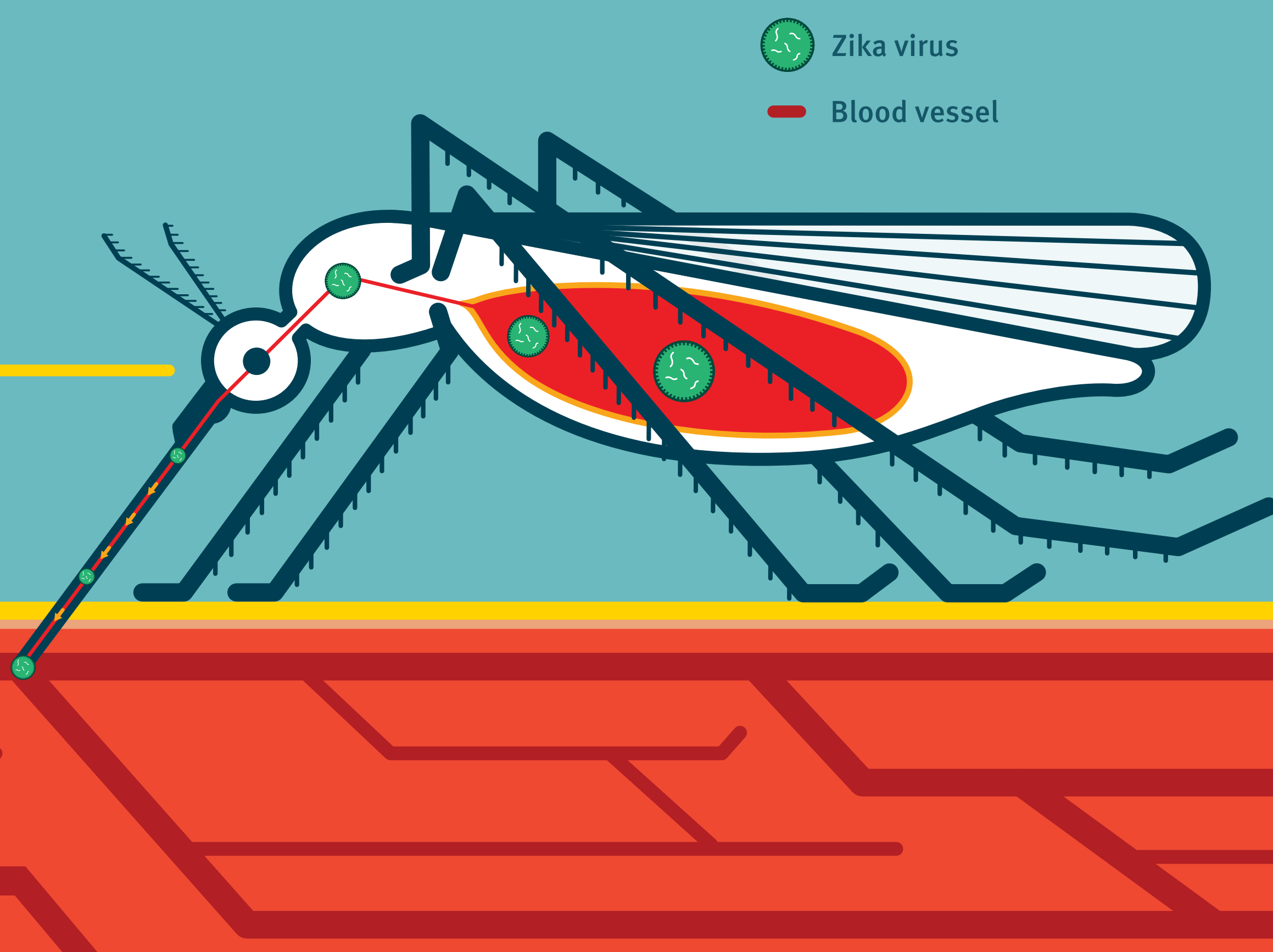
Local transmission could occur in continental Europe during the summer in areas where the tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) is present – if the Zika virus is imported by travellers.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE TIGER MOSQUITO (*Aedes albopictus*) - January 2016 -
Established



Mosquito-borne transmission

The mosquito gets infected by biting a person who has the Zika virus in his or her blood. Over the next several days, the mosquito can become infectious and transmit the Zika virus to healthy people by biting them.



Other modes of transmission

Sexual transmission

Mother-to-child transmission

Many documented cases of microcephaly in Zika-infected women, in particular in South American countries.

Sexual transmission can occur when a traveller returning from a Zika-affected area passes on the Zika virus to their partner. The main risk is related to transmission to pregnant women.

Infection during pregnancy has been linked to transmission of the virus to the foetus, resulting in congenital malformations and later, microcephaly in newborns. It is not yet clear how often this happens or what period of the pregnancy is most vulnerable.

A person can be infectious for more than six weeks. Sexual transmission has been reported on several occasions occurring **several weeks after the onset of the symptoms**.

Transmission through blood donations

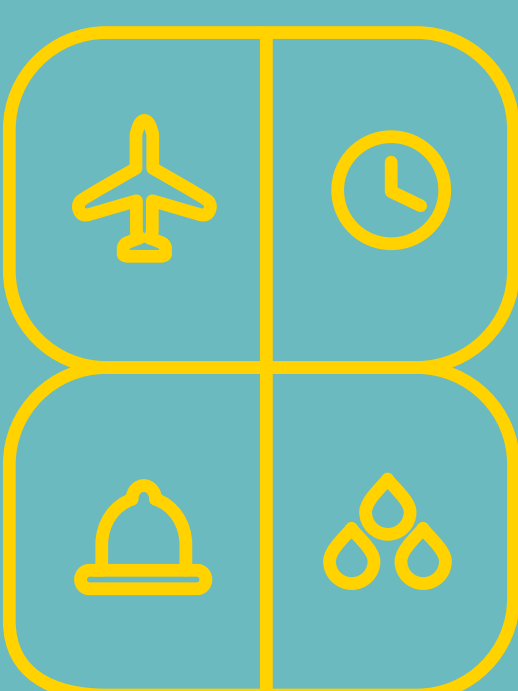
Zika virus can be present in the bloodstream for **around four weeks after the onset of symptoms**.

The number of reported infections **through blood donation** is very low, even in countries with a Zika epidemic.

What can be done to prevent infection?

When **travelling in Zika-affected areas**, avoid and prevent mosquito bites. (For example, you can use mosquito repellents or sleep under a bed net.)

Use condoms for **eight weeks after returning from Zika-affected areas** and six months if you have symptoms.



If you are pregnant or plan to get pregnant, **postpone non-essential travel** to areas with widespread transmission. Consult your doctor before travelling to any area where Zika can be found.

Don't give blood for at least **28 days after returning from Zika-affected areas**.