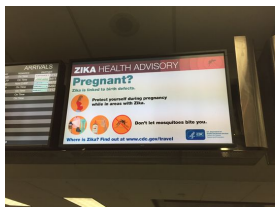


# U.S. airports respond to Zika virus threat

Harriet Baskas, Special for USA TODAY 7 a.m. EDT May 4, 2016



(Photo: Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport)

With the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in [Rio de Janeiro](#) kicking off in just three months and a growing list of countries and territories around the world [reporting active mosquito transmission](#) (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>) of the [Zika virus](#), U.S. airports are on an informal Zika virus watch.

Noting that many Georgia-based companies have worldwide business interests that require frequent travel, [Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport](#) held a joint press conference last month with the [Georgia Department of Health](#) to alert travelers to the risks of the Zika virus.

"As the region's global gateway we believe it is our responsibility to work with our health partners to educate the public about Zika virus," said Miguel Southwell, ATL general manager. "The safety and security of our guests and employees at Hartsfield-Jackson is a top priority."

At ATL, signs have been placed throughout the airport, at the U.S. Customs area and in the baggage claim alerting travelers about the Zika virus and offering tips on protection and prevention measures. In addition, EPA-registered insect repellents are available for purchase in airport newsstands.

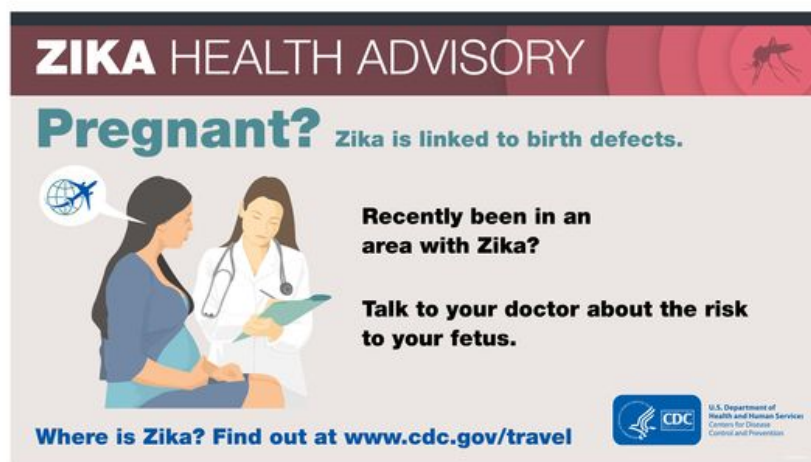


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[What travelers need to know about the Zika virus](#)

(<http://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/advice/2016/02/19/zika-virus-travel-warnings-pregnant-women/80306502/>)

At [Miami International Airport](#), an advisory (in English and Spanish) from the [Centers for Disease Control](#) is on display in passport clearance areas and airport employees have been issued cards instructing them how to recognize and respond to passengers with communicable diseases, including Zika.



An advisory on display at Miami International Airport. (Photo: Miami International Airport)

At [Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport](#), Zika prevention messages from the CDC (in English and Spanish) are front and center right next to many flight display screens, said airport spokesman Allan Siegel, and airport vendors have been instructed to add more insect repellent to their shelves.

[Orlando International Airport](#) began monitoring Zika virus reports, consulting with the CDC and local health officials, and taking preventative measures to curb the potential spread of Zika virus locally back in February.

“Working in conjunction with our community partners, we feel these steps are not only appropriate but necessary,” the airport said in a statement that outlined a plan that includes educating employees about the virus and working with the airport’s on-staff biologist and wildlife management team to monitor the mosquito population and enhance the mosquito-spraying program on airport property.



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How many people does it take to run an airport?

(<http://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/flights/2016/03/30/airport-workers-employees/82385558/>)

The Houston Airport System has three programs in place to address Zika virus concerns at Bush Intercontinental Airport and Houston Hobby.

“We are working with Houston Health Department in providing messaging to the traveling public and working with our mosquito vector contractor in determining the amount of spraying in the airport area,” said spokesman Bill Begley.

He also said employees were being reminded of the “4 D’s” through a safety and awareness program: Drain (eliminate standing water), Dress (wear long sleeves, pants and socks), Dusk/Dawn (avoid these peak mosquito times) and DEET (use proper repellants).



The Houston Airport System has three programs in place to address Zika virus concerns. (Photo: Houston Airport System)

Around the country, shops and newsstands run by the Hudson Group, including those in Chicago O’Hare, Seattle-Tacoma and Orlando International Airports, are making sure to carry several brands of insect repellent, including OFF! Deep Woods and Cutter, said Hope Remoundos, Hudson Group EVP of Sales & Marketing.

Many other airports around the country are also working with CDC and local health officials to put Zika virus education and protection programs in place.

Included on that list are some of the airports on the EcoHealth Alliance’s “Top 20” list of airports that have the highest risk to receive passengers with confirmed cases of the Zika virus this summer. The list was created using a flight risk application called FLIRT (<http://flirt.eha.io/>).

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Rank	Airport Code	City, State	Seats
1	MIA/FLL	Miami, FL	4601
2	JFK/EWR/LGA	New York, NY	4145
3	IAH	Houston, TX	1742
4	ATL	Atlanta, GA	1259
5	LAX	Los Angeles, CA	881
6	DFW	Dallas, TX	797
7	MCO	Orlando, FL	749
8	IAD/DCA/BWI	Washington, D.C.	632
9	CLT	Charlotte, NC	503
10	ORD	Chicago, IL	459
11	SJC/OAK/SFO	San Jose, CA	352
12	PHL	Philadelphia, PA	279
13	BOS	Boston, MA	234
14	LAS	Las Vegas, NV	208
15	DEN	Denver, CO	160
16	PHX	Phoenix, AZ	143
17	TPA	Tampa, FL	135
18	DTW	Detroit, MI	126
19	MSP	Minneapolis, MN	109
20	HOU	Houston, TX	102

Live Video

EcoHealth Alliance's "Top 20" list of airports that have the highest risk to receive passengers with confirmed cases of the Zika virus this summer. (Photo: Andrew Huff, Ph.D., M.S., & Karissa Whiting, & EcoHealth Alliance Tech Team)

"There's not much individuals can do with this information," said Andrew Huff, associate vice president the EcoHealth Alliance. "But government and health officials can use it as a tool for allocating resources and identifying where educational programs may be needed," he said.

Expiration dates have come and gone on refund offers and change-fee waivers [American](https://www.aa.com/i18n/travelInformation/specialAssistance/childrenTraveling.jsp?reportedLocation=homePage.do&reportedPosition=3&reportedTitle=Zika+virus+travel+policy&repositoryName=PromotionContentRepository&repositoryId=Delta) (<https://www.aa.com/i18n/travelInformation/specialAssistance/childrenTraveling.jsp?reportedLocation=homePage.do&reportedPosition=3&reportedTitle=Zika+virus+travel+policy&repositoryName=PromotionContentRepository&repositoryId=Delta>), [Delta](http://www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/traveling-with-us/advisories/zika-virus2.html) ([http://www.delta.com/content/www/en\\_US/traveling-with-us/advisories/zika-virus2.html](http://www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/traveling-with-us/advisories/zika-virus2.html)), [United](https://www.united.com/CMS/en-US/travel/news/Pages/travelnotices.aspx) (<https://www.united.com/CMS/en-US/travel/news/Pages/travelnotices.aspx>) and other airlines made when concerns were first raised about travel to areas where the Zika virus had been identified.

So for now, the standard precautions and advice for travelers heading to destinations where there are known cases of Zika are the rule:

"Bring plenty of mosquito repellent, long shirts and pants, and a full-coverage hat," advises Julia Cosgrove, AFAR's editor in chief. "Avoid areas where there's standing water. And, if you are on the coast, stay close to the beach where there's wind and relatively few mosquitoes."

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