

NEWS RELEASE

February 23, 2016

MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

**411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584**

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Zika Virus

First Case of Zika Virus Disease Reported in Washington

A Mason County resident that had recently traveled to Tonga (a Polynesian sovereign state) has recently tested positive for the Zika virus according to The Washington State Department of Health. People are being exposed to the virus by traveling to Zika virus-affected areas and being bitten by infected mosquitoes," according to Dr. Diana Yu, Mason County's Public Health Officer. The good news is that the mosquitoes species known to transmit the disease do not live in the state of Washington, making it highly unlikely that the virus could spread here through a mosquito bite.

Until more is known the CDC recommends that women who are pregnant consider waiting to travel to any area where Zika virus transmission is ongoing. If you must travel to a Zika-affected area there are several preventative measures listed on Mason County's Public Health website that can decrease your chances of being bitten by an infected mosquito. If you have traveled to a Zika virus-affected area, and are concerned, please contact your health care provider. "There have been reports of microcephaly (a rare birth defect in which a baby's head is much smaller than the heads of other children the same age and sex, generally related to under development of the brain) and other health problems in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant" explains Dr Yu.

The CDC reports outbreaks of the Zika virus have been reported in tropical Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Brazil, and other countries and territories surrounding Brazil. The virus is known to cause fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. These symptoms are usually mild lasting up to a week, but it is important to note that 80% of those infected may show no signs at all. If one does show symptoms, they usually occur 2-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

While those traveling to affected areas are those at risk of the virus, once infected, it is possible the virus can spread from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth. Other forms of transmission may be through blood transfusion and/or sexual contact with an infected person.

For additional information regarding the Zika virus please visit the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) website at www.doh.wa.gov or the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov. You may also contact the Mason County Public Health and Human Services at 360-427-9670 ext. 400 or by visiting us online at www.healthymasoncounty.org

Zika Virus References:

Washington State Department of Health

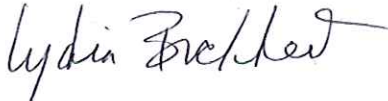
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/ZikaVirus>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

Mason County Public Health

<http://www.healthymasoncounty.org>



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