

# News

## CDC Warns Pregnant Women Against Zika-Stricken Part of Miami

All 14 cases are thought to have occurred in Miami's rapidly-gentrifying Wynwood arts district

By Kelli Kennedy and Josh Replogle  
Associated Press

MIAMI — Government health officials warned pregnant women Monday to avoid a Zika-stricken part of Miami and told couples who have been there recently to put off having children for at least two months, after the number of people feared infected through mosquito bites in the U.S. climbed to 14.

In its highly unusual and perhaps unprecedented travel warning, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also said expectant mothers should get tested for the virus if they have visited the neighborhood since mid-June.

All 14 cases are thought to have occurred in Miami's Wynwood arts district, a trendy, fast-gentrifying neighborhood of warehouses, art galleries, restaurants and boutiques.

Gov. Rick Scott asked for a CDC emergency response team to help Florida combat Zika, which has been sweeping

that mosquitoes have apparently started spreading Zika on the U.S. mainland, citing four cases they strongly believe were caused by bites. Ten more cases were announced Monday, even though Florida authorities have yet to find any mosquitoes actually carrying the virus.

CDC officials said they could not remember another time in the 70-year history of the disease-fighting agency when it told members of the public not to travel someplace in the U.S.

Zika infections in pregnant women can cause severe brain-related birth defects, including extremely small skulls. The global outbreak has led to more than 1,800 serious defects.

The virus can linger in the blood and urine for weeks, and has been found in sperm for months. As a result, the CDC said men and women who have recently been in the affected area should wait at least eight weeks before trying to conceive a child. And men who have

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Latin America and the Caribbean in recent months and now may be gaining a long-dreaded foothold in the U.S. The White House said a team will be sent quickly.

Health officials last Friday announced

had symptoms of Zika should wait at least six months, the CDC said.

The travel warning covers an area of about one square mile in Wynwood to the east of Interstate 95 and south of I-195. It's large enough, health officials



A Miami-Dade County mosquito control worker sprays around a home in the Wynwood area of Miami on Monday, Aug. 1, 2016. The CDC has issued a new advisory that says pregnant women should not travel a Zika-stricken part of Miami, and pregnant women who live there should take steps to prevent mosquito bites and sexual spread of the virus.

said, to provide a buffer around the suspected hot zone. The tropical mosquito that spreads Zika travels less than 200 yards in its lifetime.

Dr. Peter Hotez, a tropical medicine expert at the Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, said the CDC should be more cautious and expand the travel advisory to all of Miami-Dade County.

“If you're pregnant or think you might be pregnant, avoid travel to Miami, and possibly elsewhere in South Florida,” he said. “I'm guessing most women who are pregnant are doing that. I don't think they're sitting around waiting for the CDC to split hairs and fine-tune it to a specific area.”

CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said the narrowly drawn warning was dictated by science and not by any concern for Florida's crucial tourism industry. He said it was based on the nation's ability to contain previous outbreaks

of other diseases carried by the same mosquito.

“There wouldn't be a technical or scientific basis to give a broader recommendation,” Frieden said.

U.S. health officials have said all along that while isolated clusters of Zika may occur in this country, they do not expect major outbreaks like those seen in Latin America, because of better sanitation and mosquito control and widespread use of air conditioners and window screens.

At the same time, health officials expressed concern that they continue to see “moderately high” numbers of the type of mosquito that carries Zika, despite aggressive use of insecticides in Florida.

“This is a very difficult mosquito to control,” Frieden said.

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