AAP releases new Red Book chapter on Zika

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

Health officials have been working urgently to understand Zika virus and its link to birth defects since its emergence in the Western Hemisphere in 2015. Their research and recommendations are available in a new Red Book chapter the Academy released today ahead of the full 2018 book.

The new chapter provides information on Zika's clinical manifestations, etiology, epidemiology, control measures, and diagnostic tests as well as guidance on managing infants who have been exposed. It includes guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), much of which was created with input from AAP experts and updated in October.

"We have pediatricians around the country that might benefit … with the latest information that we provide in a very concise fashion," said Red Book Editor David W. Kimberlin, M.D., FAAP.

The Red Book is the Academy's authoritative resource on more than 200 childhood infectious diseases. The new Zika chapter is available at https://redbook.solutions.aap.org/chapter.aspx?sectionid=177525251&bookid=2205.

Zika is a Flavivirus like West Nile and yellow fever that was identified in 1947 in Uganda. In 2015, it was found in the Western Hemisphere and quickly spread throughout the Americas.

The virus is transmitted primarily by Aedes mosquitoes but also can be spread through sex, blood transfusions and from a mother to her unborn child.

Roughly 2,311 cases of Zika virus have been reported among pregnant women in U.S. states and 4,621 have been reported in U.S. territories.

Roughly 80% of infections are believed to be asymptomatic, but Zika can cause microcephaly and other neurologic abnormalities in infants who contract it in utero.

Readers of the new Zika chapter will notice a familiar format and the same diligence that has gone into previous Red Book chapters, according to Dr. Kimberlin. A host of experts, including the CDC and the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases, have reviewed the chapter.

"We do better for children across the country when we work closely together," Dr. Kimberlin said, "and that has certainly been the case with the response to the Zika emergence."

Resources

- AAP Zika virus website
- Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org
- CDC Zika resources for health care providers
- AAP News articles about Zika
- The Academy will hold a webinar on Zika on Dec. 13, 2017.