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6 March 2016



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# Zika Virus on the Rise: Women on Web Provides Medical Abortion for Free

Posted: 04/02/2016 17:54 GMT | Updated: 04/02/2016 17:59 GMT

Women on Web (WoW) is an online telemedical service that provides safe abortion access for women living in countries where this type of basic reproductive healthcare is severely restricted.

In the wake of the Zika virus epidemic, WoW is offering early medical abortion (up to nine weeks gestation), free of charge, for women who have been exposed to this disease. Those seeking our service can visit [www.womenonweb.org](http://www.womenonweb.org) in order to fill out an online consultation for physician evaluation.

Unlike the catastrophic Ebola outbreak in 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) is rapidly responding to the Zika epidemic, primarily affecting nations in Latin America and the Caribbean. On February 1, 2016 [WHO](#) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern after an observed increase in cases of babies born with [microcephaly](#). While Zika virus is speculated as the likely culprit, causation has yet to be officially determined.

Humans can contract Zika virus from Aedes mosquitoes and then begin to manifest a variety of [symptoms](#) including fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis that may last between two and seven days. Although there is no vaccine or cure available at this time, the recommended treatment is hydration and rest with mortality unlikely. However, Zika virus poses the greatest threat to [pregnant women](#) or women who may become pregnant because of its association with fetal microcephaly. A significant birth defect in which the circumference of the head is abnormally small, [microcephaly](#) contributes to a variety of long-term neurodevelopmental and cognitive deficits.

Pregnant women living in the Zika virus zone, now including over [twenty countries](#) and infiltrating borders from Mexico to Brasil, are at risk for disease transmission. A WHO statement from the first meeting of the [Emergency Committee](#) (EC) to address this global health emergency noted the need to control infection particularly among pregnant women and those of reproductive age.

WoW is concerned that women exposed to Zika virus will seek unsafe abortion services because many nations in the Zika virus territories have extremely restrictive abortion laws. Therefore, we are acting to ensure that women will have up-to-date information to inform the decision for a safe abortion, should they desire it. WoW perceives an unwanted pregnancy to be a medical emergency and gives women the option of termination, regardless of economic limitations.

For nearly ten years, WoW has utilized a patient-centered approach to international telemedicine in order to provide essential healthcare services for women worldwide. As medical science researchers mobilize to investigate Zika virus and its potential harmful and irreparable outcomes, we remain committed to offer women in the affected countries a choice, for free.

Follow Julia Ellis-Kahana on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/abortionpil](http://www.twitter.com/abortionpil)

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