Examining Zika Virus: Transmission, Symptoms, Treatment, and Prevention

The Zika virus is carried by infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes and transmitted through bites. The virus is still circulating in many parts of the world with documented outbreaks affecting regions such as Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

### Transmission

- **Aedes aegypti Mosquito Bite**
  - A mosquito bites an infected human within the first week of infection and becomes a carrier. Then, it can bite and infect other humans.
- **Sexual Transmission**
  - An infected person transmits the virus via bodily fluids during intercourse.
- **Blood Transfusion**
  - Zika virus can be transmitted through blood transfusions.
- **Mother to Child**
  - A pregnant mother can transmit the Zika virus to her child through blood during pregnancy or milk during breastfeeding.

### Symptoms

- **Headache**
- **Muscle and Joint Pain**
- **Fever**
- **Rash**
- **Pain relief medication to help with fever and pain**
- **Rest to help the body combat the infection**
- **Water to prevent dehydration**
- **There is no specific vaccine or antiviral treatment for Zika**

### Treatment

- **Avoid traveling to countries with known Zika virus outbreaks**
- **Avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellants**

### Prevention

- **Microcephaly**
  - If the virus is passed to the fetus during pregnancy, the developing baby will have an increased chance of birth defects such as microcephaly—a condition where the head is significantly smaller than normal. Other developmental problems include hearing loss, brain tissue damage, and eye defects.

### References