



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

RACP: travellers must follow government warnings

Media Release

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) has urged Australians travelling to areas affected by the Zika virus to follow government advice.

The [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) (DFAT) has listed 22 countries with Zika outbreaks and has advised travellers, particularly pregnant women, to stay across updates leading up to their departure. The DFAT Smart Traveller [website](#) also lists preventative measures to minimise the risk of contracting the virus.

The advice coincides with the World Health Organisation (WHO) convening an International Health Regulations Emergency Committee in Geneva on February 1, 2016. WHO stated that the level of alarm was “extremely high” with as many as four million people infected.

The Zika virus is a close relative of dengue fever with both carried by the aedes aegypti mosquito. Like dengue fever, the Zika virus is transmitted via an infected mosquito.

“While the symptoms are usually relatively mild and normally last less than a week, of most concern is the potential link to birth defects,” explained RACP President, Laureate Professor Nicholas Talley. “Research is currently underway to better understand the virus and to potentially develop a vaccine.”

Ends

Media contact: David Walsh ph: (+61) 401 164 537 david.walsh@racp.edu.au

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 15,000 physicians and 7,500 trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand.

The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients.

The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.