

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Health educates statewide youth about the Zika virus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health is taking several steps to ensure that youth and parents in the state understand how to protect themselves from the Zika virus. The department has created Zika coloring books that present prevention information in an educational and fun format.

"We have two goals - to educate youth and engage them and their parents in the process of protecting themselves. We believe this coloring book will accomplish both of those goals," said Bureau of Environmental Services Director Sherry Bradley.

Coloring books will be distributed to public schools statewide as well as to private schools that have provided contact information.

The Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito. These are the same mosquitoes that spread dengue and chikungunya viruses.

The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain or pink eye. Other common symptoms include muscle pain and headache. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting several days to a week. Zika virus typically remains in the blood of an infected person for a few days, but it can be found longer in some people. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and deaths are rare.

Removing mosquito breeding environments from around the home is the first line of defense against mosquitoes, and one of the most important. Remember, mosquitoes do not need much water to breed. "One of the keys to preventing the spread of the Zika virus is vector control by preventing their breeding sites," Ms. Bradley said. "This includes eliminating standing pools of water, disposing of unused material and keeping weeds, grass and vines trimmed."

The Zika coloring books will be provided to school-age children in Pre-K and grades 1 to 3.

For more information about the Zika virus and emergency preparedness, visit www.adph.org/mosquito.