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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 17, 2016

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ZIKA VIRUS

Kenner, LA. – The Zika virus, which is primarily spread by mosquitoes, has been in the news for nearly a year as it has spread through South America and Latin America and appears poised to reach the United States.

For adults, the disease is not that serious – 4 out of 5 people infected don't even notice the symptoms. A rash, joint pain, fever and pink eye are the most common symptoms and they last a week or less.

However, the virus has been connected to a serious birth defect when pregnant women are infected. Microcephaly is a condition in which the baby's head is smaller than expected, and in many cases, there is incomplete brain development.

Officials with Mosquito Control talked about Zika at a recent Kenner Council meeting and explained that there have been no locally transmitted cases of the virus anywhere in the U.S. While it's possible the mosquito may show up in Southern states in the upcoming weeks and months - we are not expecting to experience the epidemic levels seen in South America.

Officials explained that the mosquito most strongly linked to Zika (known as the Yellow Fever Mosquito – or *Aedes aegypti*) is present but not that common in Kenner and the New Orleans area. The more common mosquito with the ability to spread Zika is the Asian Tiger, or *Aedes albopictus*.

Mosquitoes that transmit Zika usually breed in containers of water around our homes and don't stray far away from their nurseries. Although residents have little chance of contracting Zika on fields, in the woods, marsh or on hunting or fishing trips, mosquitoes found in our own backyards can potentially transmit the disease.

A combination of being vigilant about eliminating containers and other mosquito breeding sites in our own yards and protecting ourselves and family from mosquito bites by dressing appropriately and considering the use of repellants can significantly reduce the risk of getting the Zika virus.

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