

The Behavioral Health Impact of Zika

Mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus have been identified in Florida, so it's critical that individuals living in the affected region and across the country know where to go to access information about prevention, detection and treatment. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has put together a website with resources about Zika, including those specific to certain groups of people, including [pregnant women, parents, travelers and employers and workers.](#)

The impact of Zika in the United States is more than just physical. Many individuals, particularly those who live in a region where Zika has been found, may be experiencing anxiety or stress simply as a result of hearing about the disease from newspapers, television and on social media. SAMHSA has put together a [tip sheet](#) to help people cope with these feelings.

In their tip sheet, [SAMHSA](#) makes two important points:

- **Set limits on how much time you spend reading or watching news about the outbreak.** You will want to stay up to date on news of the outbreak, particularly if you have loved ones in places where people have become sick. But make sure to take time away from the news to focus on things in your life that are going well and that you can control.
- **Find people and resources you can depend on for accurate health information.** Learn about the outbreak and how you can protect yourself against illness if you are at risk. You may turn to your family doctor, a state or local health department, U.S. government agencies, or an international organization. Check out the sidebar on the next page for links to good sources of information about

infectious disease outbreaks.

With 24/7 news cycles and the prevalence on social media and online news sites, it's critical to set boundaries around how often and where you get your news. SAMHSA or other government websites, such as the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), offer an updated overview of the current situation.

If you feel you need additional assistance, please call SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 to access additional services in both English and Spanish.