

Pregnant woman diagnosed with Zika in Australia

10 February 2016

A pregnant woman has been diagnosed with the Zika virus in Australia, officials said Wednesday, adding that the disease was acquired overseas.

The Australian government has urged [pregnant women](#) to avoid areas where the mosquito-borne Zika virus, suspected of causing a surge in brain-damaged babies in Brazil, is circulating.

"A woman was diagnosed with the disease in South East Queensland yesterday after recently returning from overseas," Queensland Health said in a statement.

"The woman is pregnant. This is not a locally acquired case of the virus."

It is the third confirmed case of the virus so far in Queensland this year, although one of these cases—a woman who had recently returned from El Salvador, was later found to have contracted the virus in 2015.

None of the cases in Australia of Zika, which normally causes relatively mild flu-like symptoms and a rash, were locally acquired.

Scientists suspect that when Zika strikes a [pregnant woman](#) it can cause her fetus to develop microcephaly—a condition which causes the baby to be born with an abnormally small head.

There have been a number of reported cases of Zika in Australia as a result of travellers infected overseas returning home but the risk of an outbreak in the country is considered low.

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