

Barbados confirms three Zika cases in pregnant women

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Barbados on Tuesday confirmed three cases of Zika in pregnant women, bringing to seven the number of people on the Caribbean island with the virus, which is believed to be linked to birth defects.

The women will be given specialized [obstetric care](#), the Ministry of Health said in a statement. The new cases were announced on the Barbados government information services Facebook page.

Zika, a primarily mosquito-borne illness, has spread rapidly through Latin America and the Caribbean. It generally causes mild symptoms but has been blamed for a rapid rise in the number of children born with microcephaly—abnormally small heads and brains.

Barbados said that link has not been confirmed.

"The situation is still evolving and information is being updated regularly," the Ministry of Health said.

The World Health Organization has declared a global medical emergency to combat Zika and individual countries and regions are beginning to mobilize. With no cure or vaccine for the virus, some countries have taken the extraordinary step of urging women to delay getting pregnant.

According to the Pan-American Health Organization, 26 countries have confirmed cases, spanning 7,000 kilometers (4,400 miles) from Mexico

to Paraguay.

The hardest hit country is Brazil, which hosts the Summer Olympics starting in August.

Brazil has warned [pregnant women](#) not to travel there but Games organizers have said by the time the Olympics start, the main mosquito season will be over and they don't expect the illness to affect the sporting extravaganza.

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