

Brazil launches anti-Zika campaign in schools

February 19 2016



An Army soldier shows *Aedes aegypti* larvae found in the school where Brazil's Minister of Health Marcelo Castro launched a national day of awareness to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, in Brasilia, Brazil, Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is a vector for the spread of the Zika virus, it lives largely inside homes and can lay eggs in even a bottle-cap's worth of stagnant water. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

Brazil's president, government ministers, state governors, health agents

and members of the armed forces Friday visited schools throughout the country to involve students in the nationwide campaign to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that spreads the Zika virus.

President Dilma Rousseff was on hand at a school in the city of Juazeiro, in the impoverished northeastern region that's the epicenter of Brazil's Zika virus outbreak.

The Health Ministry said on its website that schools in Brasilia, in the country's 26 state capitals and in 115 other cities would be visited.

The ministry said that the objective is to raise the awareness of students of the importance of eliminating the breeding ground of the mosquito that also transmits dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever.

Rousseff told students in Juazeiro that *Aedes aegypti* "is something that has to worry all of us, the president, the governor ... and every one of the pupils here."

The mosquito lives largely inside homes and can lay eggs in even a bottle-cap's worth of stagnant water. The dishes beneath potted plants are a favorite spot, as are abandoned tires, bird feeders and even the little puddles of rainwater that collect in the folds of plastic tarps.

The Education Ministry said nearly 190,000 basic education schools, universities and vocational training centers were to be visited on Friday.



Army soldiers conduct an inspection in a school during a national day of awareness to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, in Brasilia, Brazil, Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is a vector for the spread of the Zika virus, it lives largely inside homes and can lay eggs in even a bottle-cap's worth of stagnant water. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

Zika's immediate effects are mild, consisting mostly of a moderate fever and a rash, and only a fifth of those afflicted notice any symptoms.

But Brazilian authorities also say they have detected a spike in cases of microcephaly, a condition that leaves infants with unusually small heads and can result in brain damage and numerous developmental and health problems. The link between Zika and microcephaly remains unproven.

Since October, 5,280 suspected cases of microcephaly have been reported, Brazil's Health Ministry said on Friday. Of those, 508 cases had been confirmed and 837 discarded. Of the confirmed cases, 41 have

been connected to Zika.



Brazil's Health Minister Marcelo Castro talks with students during a national day of awareness to eradicate the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, in Brasilia, Brazil, Friday, Feb. 19, 2016. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is a vector for the spread of the Zika virus, it lives largely inside homes and can lay eggs in even a bottle-cap's worth of stagnant water. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)



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