

In Brazil, pregnant women urged to be cautious with a kiss

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Paulo Gadelha, president of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Brazil's premier state-run research institute for tropical diseases, speaks during a press conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Friday, Feb. 5, 2016. Active Zika virus has been found in urine and saliva samples, Gadelha said, cautioning that that further study is needed to determine whether the mosquito-borne virus in those body fluids is capable of infecting people. Gadelha recommended that pregnant women avoid kissing and sharing cutlery, glasses and plates with people who have symptoms of the virus. (AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo)

A Brazilian health official warned pregnant women to think twice before giving a kiss as global measures mounted Friday against the Zika virus suspected of a link to birth defects.

The U.N. human rights agency called for some nations to loosen strict laws against abortion and U.S. [health](#) authorities recommended men who have visited areas with the Zika virus use condoms if they have sex with pregnant women.

Paulo Gadelha, president of the Fiocruz research institute, said at a news conference that scientists have found live samples of the virus in saliva and urine samples, and the possibility it could be spread by the two body fluids requires further study.

He said that calls for special precaution to be taken with pregnant women, and suggested they avoid kissing people other than a regular partner or sharing cutlery, glasses and plates with people who have symptoms of the virus.

"This is not a generalized public health measure, for the love of God," he added.

Brazil plunged into Carnival season on Friday—a time when people commonly kiss strangers they meet at massive street parties.

Scientists at the Fiocruz institute say they're trying to determine if the [body fluids](#) can spread Zika to new patients.



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Meanwhile in Geneva, spokeswoman Cecile Pouilly said the OHCHR was asking governments in Zika-affected countries in Latin and South America to repeal any policies that break with international standards and restrict access to sexual and reproductive health services, including abortion.

"We are asking those governments to go back and change those laws," she said. "Because how can they ask those women not to become

pregnant but also not offer them first information that is available, but the possibility to stop their pregnancies if they wish?"

Pouilly said that about a quarter of women had experienced physical or sexual violence in El Salvador in the past year.

"So that also shows that many of these pregnancies are out of their control and countries obviously have to take that into account," she said. Pouilly said that safe abortion services should be provided to the full extent of the law. "The key point is that women should have the choice and (make) informed decisions," she said. "Women should be able to have an abortion if they want."

Meanwhile, U.S. health officials said men who have visited an area with Zika should use condoms if they have sex with a pregnant woman—for the entire duration of the pregnancy.

The guidance issued Friday also says men might consider abstaining or using condoms even if they have sex with a woman who isn't pregnant.

Zika virus disease is mainly spread by mosquitoes. In most people it causes mild or no symptoms. But officials recently detected a case of sexual transmission of the disease in Texas.

Officials previously recommended [pregnant women](#) postpone trips to more than two dozen countries with Zika outbreaks, mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Several Latin American nations have urged women to postpone pregnancies.

To date, the mosquito-borne virus has spread to more than 20 countries in the Americas, including some where sexual violence is rampant.

Brazil responded to complaints it had been slow to share data about the

illness by announcing late Thursday that it's sending a set of Zika samples to U.S. health authorities.

The announcement came hours after The Associated Press revealed that international health officials were frustrated at Brazil's refusal to share enough viral samples and other information to answer the most worrying question about the outbreak: Whether the disease is truly causing a spike in babies born with abnormally small heads.

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