

Czech Republic reports first two Zika cases

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Czech physicians have diagnosed the country's first two cases of the mosquito-borne Zika virus in tourists who returned from the Caribbean two weeks ago, the health minister said on Thursday.

"The first case is a man who stayed in Martinique, the other is a 49-year-old woman who stayed in the Dominican Republic," Health Minister Svatopluk Nemecek told reporters.

Both showed the mild flu-like symptoms that most Zika patients exhibit, and both had rashes, Nemecek said, adding that they were left in home care.

The growing belief that Zika can also trigger microcephaly—a congenital condition that causes abnormally small heads and hampers brain development—in babies born to mothers infected while pregnant has spread international alarm.

Cases of the virus have been reported in several European countries including Britain, Denmark, Italy and Spain.

The World Health Organization has said that up to 46 countries have reported some level of evidence of Zika infections while 130 countries are home to the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that carries the virus.

There is currently no cure or vaccine against Zika.

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