

Zika-hit Miami neighborhood safe: Florida governor

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A trendy Miami neighborhood at the epicenter of the first US outbreak of the Zika virus is safe to visit, Florida Governor Rick Scott said Sunday.

"We are doing a very good job of working to get rid of the mosquitoes," he said on NBC's Meet the Press. "We have been able to reduce the area that we had a concern about by 10 blocks on Friday."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Monday issued an unusual domestic travel warning for a one-mile section north of downtown Miami where mosquitoes have spread the virus to 16 people.

In particular, it advised women who are pregnant to avoid travel to the area, a popular arts and restaurant district known as Wynwood, or consult their doctor if they live there.

The virus can cause microcephaly, a severe birth defect in which babies are born with abnormally small heads and permanent brain damage.

Scott said he had visited the neighborhood on Thursday and it was "absolutely" safe.

"We're making sure everybody pregnant has the opportunity to get an assessment and test if they want it," he said. "And we're keeping everybody informed. What we're doing is working."

He said he had asked the CDC for 10,000 additional Zika prevention kits, which contain mosquito repellent, condoms and tabs to treat standing water.

"We still need the federal government to show up, the president and Congress have to work together and this is an international issue, not just a Florida issue," he said.

President Barack Obama asked Congress in February to allocate \$1.9 billion for the fight against Zika, but was met with resistance by Republican lawmakers who said the funds should instead be moved from coffers previously reserved for fighting the Ebola outbreak.

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