

Philippines reports first Zika pregnancy case

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The Philippines on Monday reported its first known case of a pregnant woman infected with the Zika virus that threatens unborn babies, as authorities warned people to avoid mosquitos.

Health Secretary Paulyn Ubial said 12 cases of Zika had been detected across the Philippines this month, including a 22-year-old woman from the central island of Cebu who is 19 weeks' pregnant with her first child.

"Initial ultrasound did not detect any foetal abnormalities. She will be monitored regularly during the entire period of the pregnancy," the health department said.

Zika-infected pregnant women can give birth to babies with microcephaly, a deformation marked by abnormally small brains and heads.

Of the country's 12 Zika cases, eight were female and ranged in age from 9 to 55, the department said.

None of those infected had travelled a month before testing positive and all had since recovered, it said.

Special teams have been dispatched to all the affected areas to investigate where the infection came from and recommend measures to deal with the virus, which can be spread by the bite of a mosquito or via sexual contact.

Ubial called on the public to destroy mosquito breeding places, use [insect repellent](#) and wear condoms during sex.

Scientists warned this month that the world should prepare for a "[global epidemic](#)" of microcephaly due to Zika as there is no cure or vaccine for the disease.

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