

Scientists say Singapore Zika is Asian, cases reach 200

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Singapore on Saturday reported 215 cases of Zika infections as scientists in the city-state said the virus strain comes from within Asia and was not imported from Brazil.

The Ministry of Health and National Environment Agency said in a joint statement on Saturday evening that of the 26 new cases reported Saturday, 24 were linked to a cluster in the Aljunied district where the country's first locally-transmitted cases were reported.

The statement did not say where the other two cases were from.

A week after Singapore reported its first case of locally transmitted Zika infection, local scientists say they have completed [genetic sequencing](#) of the virus.

"The analysis found that the virus belongs to the Asian lineage and likely evolved from the strain that was already circulating in Southeast Asia. The [virus](#) from these two patients was not imported from South America," the statement said.

The Aedes mosquito-borne Zika, which has been detected in 67 countries and territories including hard-hit Brazil, causes only mild symptoms for most people such as fever and a rash.

But pregnant women who catch it can give birth to babies with microcephaly, a deformation marked by abnormally small brains and

heads.

Malaysia on Saturday confirmed its first locally transmitted case of Zika infection in a man living in the eastern Malaysian state of Sabah.

This comes two days after the first case on Malaysian soil was reported in a woman who is believed to have contracted it while visiting her daughter in neighbouring Singapore.

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