

Another mosquito species may carry Zika

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Culex quinquefasciatus mosquitoes (pictured here), can contain live Zika virus in saliva, according to new UF/IFAS research. To date the mosquito species *Aedes aegypti* is considered the primary carrier of Zika virus. Credit: Lyle Buss, UF/IFAS

Another mosquito may carry the zika virus, but more research is needed to confirm the early lab tests, University of Florida scientists say. UF

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences researchers detected zika in the saliva of southern house mosquitoes collected in Florida.

Chelsea Smartt, an associate professor at the UF/IFAS Florida Medical Entomology Lab in Vero Beach, Florida, said her study's finding supports that the mosquito species, known scientifically as *Culex quinquefasciatus* [mosquitoes](#), can contain live Zika virus in saliva. To date the mosquito species *Aedes aegypti* is considered the primary carrier of Zika virus.

Still, Smartt stresses researchers must perform more experiments to know whether and how much of a role *Culex quinquefasciatus* plays in spreading zika.

In 2016, zika caused cases of microcephaly – a rare neurological condition in which an infant's head is significantly smaller than the heads of other children of the same age and gender—in some newborns in the United States, due in part to traveler-related global spread of [zika virus](#).

Scientists worldwide, including Smartt, have been studying the origins of zika and how to control it.

Culex quinquefasciatus is common in the southern U.S. and is abundant in Florida, she said. The mosquito is found in tropical and sub-tropical areas, including Brazil, Africa and Southeast Asia.

In areas of the world where these mosquitoes feed on humans, there may be populations of *Culex quinquefasciatus* that can spread [zika](#), Smartt said.

Her research is published in the journal *Frontiers in Microbiology*.

With mosquito season starting soon, faculty at the UF/IFAS FMEL give

the following recommendations to avoid mosquito bites:

- Get rid of containers in your yard or outside your business, because they collect water and become perfect habitats for immature stages of these mosquito species.
- Inspect windows and doors for holes and tears, and repair them to keep out mosquitoes.
- Use repellents when you plan to be outdoors when mosquitoes are biting. The longest lasting repellents contain DEET and picaridin. Whatever type of repellent you use, read the label to make sure you're putting on a product registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

More information: Chelsea T. Smartt et al. *Culex quinquefasciatus* (Diptera: Culicidae) From Florida Transmitted Zika Virus, *Frontiers in Microbiology* (2018). [DOI: 10.3389/fmicb.2018.00768](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmicb.2018.00768)

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