



NEWS RELEASE

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KBC taking steps to protect blood supply from Zika virus

LEXINGTON, KY – Kentucky Blood Center is asking donors to refrain from giving blood for 28 days after having traveled to the following areas where the Zika virus is most prominent: Mexico, the Caribbean, Latin or South America.

“While it is believed the risk of transmitting the virus through blood donation is very low, until we have definitive information, we are taking this cautionary step,” said Kentucky Blood Center Medical Director Dr. Dennis Williams.

Because this new deferral could impact the number of blood donations and, ultimately, the blood supply, Kentucky Blood Center (KBC) is asking anyone who has not traveled to these areas within the past few months and is eligible to give blood, to do so soon.

KBC is monitoring information about the Zika virus and other steps may be necessary as information develops.

About Kentucky Blood Center

KBC, founded nearly 50 years ago, is the largest independent, full-service, non-profit blood center in Kentucky. Licensed by the FDA, KBC’s sole purpose is to collect, process and distribute blood for patients in Kentucky hospitals.

All blood that is donated with KBC is returned to the Beaumont Donor Center where it is processed, prepared and stored for shipment to Kentucky hospitals.

Blood needs are ongoing. Red cells last only 42 days and must be continually replenished to adequately support Kentucky hospitals. Statistics show that one in seven hospital patients will require blood transfusions during their stay. However, only 37 percent of the population is eligible to donate blood and less than 10 percent does. All blood types are needed, and there is a particular need for type O negative blood since it is the “universal donor” and needed in emergencies when the patient’s blood type is unknown.

The blood already on the shelf is the blood used in an emergency. That’s why KBC is always encouraging people to donate blood.