

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Our ref: FOI 2017/01814
Your ref:

Date: 31 May 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 3 February 2017 requesting the following information:

- "1. Please provide a copy/copies of all assessments made since January 1, 2015, in relation to the potential for the Ebola virus being used as a weapon.*
- 2. Please provide a copy/copies of all assessments in relation to the potential for the Zika virus being used as a weapon.*
- 3. Please provide a copy/copies of all strategy documents in relation to dealing with Zika.*

*Yes I am requesting copies of all assessments made since January 1, 2015 in relation to the potential for the Zika virus being used as a weapon.
In relation to part 3 strategy documents in relation to dealing with Zika in terms of a medical strategy would be sufficient thanks"*

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We apologise for the time taken to respond to your request, which was received within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on 3 February 2017.

A search for the information has now been completed within the MOD, and we can confirm that no information in scope of your request is held.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find the following information helpful. This was published on the Defence Intranet on 13 January 2017.

Zika virus – Information for defence personnel

1. Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus that is responsible for a large outbreak of a mild self-limiting illness in Central and South America, the Caribbean, South East Asia and Oceania (Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia). The virus has hit the headlines because it may be associated with birth defects.

2. Most people infected with Zika virus infection do not have any symptoms. Of the remaining 20% that do develop symptoms (headache, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint aches, mild fever and rash), it is normally a mild and self-limiting illness lasting 2 – 7 days with no serious complications. Death from the disease is very rare.
3. There is currently no vaccine or drug to prevent Zika infection. The mosquitoes that transmit Zika virus bite primarily during the day (especially during early-mid morning and late afternoon/dusk) and can transmit other diseases such as Dengue, Chikungunya and Yellow Fever so it is essential that strict bite avoidance measures are taken including:
 - use of a good repellent containing DEET
 - loose cover-up clothing
 - use of bed nets.
4. Travellers to regions where these diseases occur (irrespective of Zika virus specific risk) should ideally seek travel health advice from their GP, practice nurse or travel clinic at least 4 to 6 weeks before they travel. Even if time is short it is still not too late to get travel advice.
5. Although the majority of Zika virus cases are acquired via mosquito bite, sexual transmission of Zika virus infection can occur. The overall risk of sexual transmission of Zika virus is considered to be low, but the number of reports is increasing. All travellers to countries, territories and areas regarded as high or moderate risk of Zika should follow precautions to avoid sexual transmission.
6. DMS follows National and International Guidance related to prevention of Zika virus infection. The [latest advice](#), including information on [testing for Zika](#) and [prevention of sexual transmission](#), is available on the Public Health England website. Specific questions should be directed to the single service Consultants in Public Health.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Dstl Secretariat