

A monthly wellness newsletter from Better You

## Understanding Zika Virus

In recent months, Zika virus has been in the news around the world. With cases being diagnosed here in the state of Florida, it's important to know the symptoms of the virus and what you can do to decrease your chances of being infected.

Zika can spread through the bite of an infected mosquito, through sexual contact with an infected partner, or during pregnancy when the mother passes it to the fetus. It has been associated with microcephaly, which is a birth defect that affects brain development. Symptoms of Zika are not always present or can be very mild, lasting up to a week.

Common symptoms include:



FEVER



RASH



JOINT PAIN



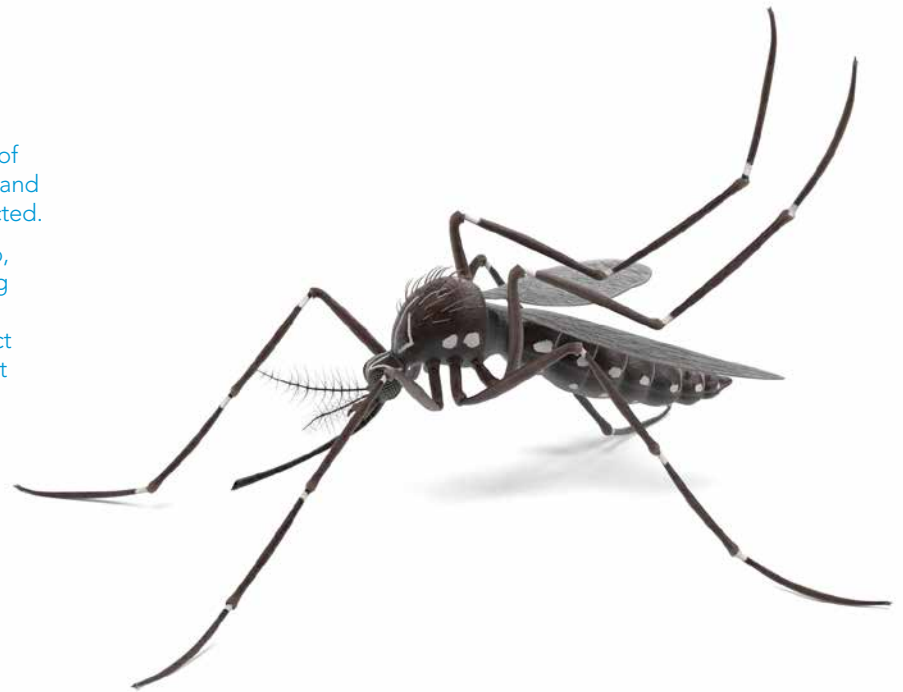
CONJUNCTIVITIS  
(red eyes)



MUSCLE  
PAIN



HEADACHE



If you have recently traveled out of the country to someplace affected by the virus, you can take a blood or urine test to find out if you are infected. Unfortunately, there is not an existing medication or vaccine to help prevent or treat the condition, so doctors focus on managing the symptoms and preventing future cases.

Here's what you can do to protect you and your family from Zika virus:

- Use insect repellent to prevent mosquito bites.
- Wear protective clothing, including long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Remove standing water around your home to minimize mosquito breeding.

- Avoid non-air conditioned environments and places without window or door screens.
- Avoid travelling to places where Zika has been reported, especially if you are planning to conceive or are pregnant.
- If your sexual partner has traveled to or lives in an area with Zika, abstain or always use a condom. This is strongly recommended for pregnant women.

As the world continues to learn more about the virus, it's important that you remember these tips to help minimize your risk of exposure. For more information, go to the website for the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

## Getting Ready for Your New Addition

The Healthy Addition® Prenatal Education Program is available to help pregnant Florida Blue members prepare for the birth of their child. To enroll in the program, simply email [healthyaddition@floridablue.com](mailto:healthyaddition@floridablue.com) or call 1-800-955-7635 and select option 6.

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# Foam Rolling Is Good for Your Health

If you have been to a gym recently, you may have seen someone rolling around on the thick, foam noodles used in the pool and wondered what they were doing. Foam rollers are now a standard piece of equipment in most gyms, and they help with a massage technique, called self-myofascial release (SMR). Stress, physical training, overuse, underuse, movement imbalances and injuries can cause painful knots in the muscles. So, many people use the foam rollers to reduce that pain and decrease their chances of injury. Performing foam rolling with stretching several times per week:

- Increases circulation and blood flow to speed up recovery
- Improves range of motion

- Breaks up scar tissue
- Relieves pain, soreness and stiffness
- Increases flexibility

Foam rollers come in many sizes and firmness, so be sure you are using one that fits your needs. It's best to start with a softer foam roller to begin with and control the amount of pressure you apply. Like exercising, start slowly and increase the pressure as you are able to tolerate the discomfort. Use your body weight to apply pressure to the soft tissue areas that you want to target, avoiding bones and joints. If it is too painful, your body will respond by causing the muscles to tighten more, so support enough of your body weight to make sure that it is slightly uncomfortable, but not painful.

Focus on one area at a time, slowly working on each small section of muscle, rather than large repetitive movements that cover the entire muscle to avoid inflammation. Stay on one spot for one to two breaths and then move an inch higher, lower, right or left. If you do not feel any tension in that direction, move an inch in another direction and repeat this process. As you progress, you can spend more time on tender spots and increase the firmness of the roller. Stretch each muscle group after using the foam roller on that area to increase flexibility and reduce pain.

Foam rolling is generally considered safe for everyone, but it's always a good idea to check with your doctor first if you have any pre-existing health or musculoskeletal conditions.



## Success Story: Balancing Wellness and Work



The Florida Blue Better You wellness program has partnered with Nassau County Schools to help their employees focus on their health. The program continues to grow and includes onsite personal health assessments and wellness activities. Kathy Gammons is

a bus driver who started as a wellness champion at the Nassau County Schools Yulee Bus Yard in 2009. She struggled with her weight for about 18 years and now she thanks the wellness program for helping her turn her life around.

Gammons says, "I love my family, my job and my life itself, so I made changes to make myself healthier. I am still the wellness champion for my bus yard and I'm proud to say that I am now 192 pounds with 50 more pounds to go!"

Gammons continues to make lifestyle changes and adds that the wellness program "has helped a lot and I'm going to get there with its help. Thank you to Florida Blue for helping our company make our wellness program a success for the Yulee Bus Yard. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

# Fresh and Healthy Recipe of the Month

## Sicilian Cauliflower

Cauliflower isn't the most popular vegetable, because most people don't know how to cook it. But with this easy, mouth-watering recipe, your family will reap the nutritional benefits of this super veggie. Cauliflower is not only low in saturated fat and cholesterol, but it is also a good source of protein, riboflavin, niacin, magnesium and phosphorous, and an even greater source of dietary fiber, vitamin C and K, vitamin B6, folate, potassium, manganese and pantothenic acid.



### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups Vidalia onions, diced
- 1 pound crushed tomatoes, canned, low sodium
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth, or water
- 1 large head of cauliflower, broken into florets
- 1 pound ground beef, 85% lean
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese

### Directions:

1. In large saucepan over medium heat, cook olive oil and garlic for about 1-2 minutes.
2. Add onions and cook until translucent.
3. Add crushed tomatoes, vegetable broth and cauliflower florets. Stir thoroughly and bring to a boil then simmer for 20-30 minutes.
4. In a separate pan, brown ground beef, drain fat and set aside.
5. Once cauliflower is ready (if you can place a fork through it you know it is done), add browned ground beef, and fresh herbs. Stir and simmer for another 15 minutes.
6. Scoop one serving into individual bowls and top with fresh Parmesan cheese.

**Nutrition:** Serving size: 1 cup. Serves 9. Calories: 150; Total Fat: 6g; Saturated Fat: 2g; Trans Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 30mg; Sodium: 280mg; Total Carbohydrate: 11g; Dietary Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 5g; Protein: 14g; Vitamin A: 6%; Vitamin C: 70%; Calcium: 8%; Iron: 8%.

Recipe courtesy of [eatright.org](http://eatright.org)