Yesterday at CSG the Red Cross donation bus visited. I noticed a new question about travel to countries where mosquitos carrying the Zika virus live. My curiosity clicked in and here is what I learned.

In mid March the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued guidelines [2] to safeguard the nation's blood supply and the new question is a result of that guidance. The Red Cross released a statement [3] on March 14 explaining how it would comply with the guidelines.

Risk factors that the Red Cross is asking about include:

- travel to or residence in countries on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Zika Travel Information list [4] within the last four weeks;
- diagnosis of Zika virus infection;
- existence of two or more Zika virus infection symptoms within two weeks of leaving an area with local transmission; or
- sexual contact within the last four weeks with a man who in the three months before sexual contact was diagnosed with Zika virus infection, or traveled to or resided in an area with local Zika virus transmission.

Potential donors with any of these risk factors will be asked to schedule their blood donation for four weeks after the end of the defined risk periods above.

If a donor develops symptoms after donation, they are asked to notify the Red Cross so the blood product can be quarantined. The Red Cross says donations from donors who develop any symptoms of disease are not used for transfusion.

By:
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