



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

## **2016 DOHMH Health Alert #48: New Recommendation: Conduct Routine Testing for Zika Virus through Commercial Laboratories**

*Please share with your colleagues in Obstetrics/Gynecology, Maternal/Fetal Medicine, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Urgent Care, Pediatrics, Neonatology, Infectious Disease, and Neurology:*

- **Commercial laboratories now offer comprehensive diagnostic testing for Zika virus, including serology and nucleic acid amplification testing.**
- **Providers caring for New York City (NYC) residents should now use commercial laboratories for routine Zika virus testing, including testing of pregnant women.**
  - **The NYC Health Department will host a conference call on Tuesday, October 25 at 12 pm for providers seeking additional information (details below).**
- **Providers should continue to send specimens to the NYC Public Health Laboratory, and not to a commercial lab, in the following situations:**
  - **Infants with findings concerning for possible congenital Zika virus infections**
  - **Placental/fetal tissues collected at delivery or pregnancy termination (elective or spontaneous) for women with laboratory evidence of Zika virus infection during pregnancy**
  - **Possible Guillain-Barré syndrome or any unusual neurologic manifestation**
  - **Possible unusual modes of transmission (e.g., transfusion, organ transplantation)**
- **The NYC Health Department will continue to provide testing for patients whose insurance does not cover the cost of testing at a commercial laboratory.**

October 17, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

Multiple commercial laboratories now offer comprehensive diagnostic testing for Zika virus, including serology (Zika virus IgM) and nucleic acid amplification testing (NAAT; NAATs include RT-PCR and transcription-mediated amplification) of urine and blood. The New York City (NYC) Health Department requests that providers use commercial laboratories, rather than the NYC Public Health Laboratory, for most cases in which Zika virus testing is clinically indicated. This includes routine testing of pregnant women potentially exposed to Zika virus.

However, in the following situations, the Health Department asks that providers call **1-866-692-3641** to request testing of specimens through the NYC Public Health Laboratory:

- **Infant testing (NAAT and serology) when:**
  - **The mother has laboratory evidence of Zika virus infection during pregnancy, OR**
  - **The infant has findings concerning for congenital Zika virus infection, even if maternal Zika virus laboratory tests were negative.**
- **Placental/fetal tissues collected at the time of delivery or pregnancy termination (elective or spontaneous) for women with laboratory evidence of Zika virus infection during pregnancy.**
- **Guillain-Barré syndrome, or any other unusual neurologic manifestation, with a history of recent potential exposure to Zika virus.**

- Concern for an unusual mode of transmission (e.g., transfusion or organ transplantation).
- Patient lacks insurance to cover indicated Zika virus testing. Providers' offices should consult the patient's insurance provider to determine whether testing is covered.

For information on when testing is indicated, which tests to request, and how to request testing, visit the NYC Health Department website, [www.nyc.gov/health/provider/zika](http://www.nyc.gov/health/provider/zika):

- 1) Clinical indications for Zika virus testing: see [Testing for Zika/When to Test for Zika](#)
- 2) Guidance on laboratory testing for patients with suspected Zika exposure or infection: see [Testing for Zika/Which Tests to Order](#)
- 3) Testing offered by commercial labs: see [Testing for Zika/Commercial Laboratories](#)
- 4) Instructions for obtaining testing through NYC DOHMH: see [Testing for Zika/Testing Resources](#)

**NOTE:** The NYC Health Department will host a conference call to discuss the use of commercial laboratories when testing patients for Zika virus infection at 12 pm on **Tuesday, October 25**. We invite you to join using the following number: 866-216-6835, access code 962755.

Sincerely,



Jay K. Varma, MD  
Deputy Commissioner, Division of Disease Control

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