



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

2016 DOHMH Advisory #37: New Zika Virus Testing Policy in New York City

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

- **An increasing number of commercial clinical laboratories now offer testing for Zika virus infection.**
- **If Zika virus testing is clinically indicated, providers should use commercial clinical laboratories for:**
 - **Non-pregnant persons with a history of travel to an area with active Zika virus transmission***
- **If Zika virus testing is clinically indicated, providers should use the Health Department for:**
 - **Pregnant women**
 - **Infants**
 - **Persons with Guillain-Barré syndrome or other neurological complications**
 - **Suspected cases of sexual transmission**
 - **Suspected cases of local mosquito-borne transmission**
- **The Health Department will continue to provide testing if the provider cannot use a commercial clinical laboratory or the patient is uninsured.**

August 24, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

The Health Department is revising its testing recommendations to focus its resources on testing the highest priority patients and to minimize the burden to New York City providers. Several commercial clinical laboratories now offer rRT-PCR testing for Zika virus infection, and at least one laboratory (LabCorp) offers IgM serology. A current list of commercial laboratories that offer Zika testing is available at <http://www.nyc.gov/zika/provider>.

When to Use the Health Department for Zika Testing

Use the Health Department Provider Access Line (**1-866-692-3641**) to order Zika virus testing at the Public Health Laboratory for:

- a. A pregnant woman (regardless of symptoms) who:
 - i. Spent time in an area with active Zika virus transmission* while pregnant, or
 - ii. Had unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with a partner who recently spent time in an area with active Zika virus transmission*

* See CDC website for most up to date list of areas with active Zika virus transmission at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>

- b. A fetus or infant with suspected or confirmed microcephaly or intracranial calcifications (diagnosed prenatally or at birth) whose mother, even if she tested negative for Zika:
 - i. Spent time in an area with active Zika virus transmission* while pregnant, or
 - ii. During pregnancy, had unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with a partner who recently spent time in an area with active Zika virus transmission*
- c. A person who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome or other neurologic manifestation (e.g., encephalitis, paresthesias, or transverse myelitis) after spending time in an area with active Zika virus transmission* or had unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with a partner who recently spent time in an area with active Zika virus transmission*
- d. Suspected local mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission in New York City in persons older than 5 years, defined as:
 - i. Presence of 3 or more of the following symptoms: fever, disseminated maculopapular rash, arthralgia, or conjunctivitis, AND
 - ii. No history of travel to an area with active Zika virus transmission* in the past 4 weeks, AND
 - iii. No history of sex with a person who recently traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission* within the past 4 weeks

(NOTE: Children 5 years and under are not included due to the high prevalence of other viral illnesses with symptoms similar to Zika virus infection, but providers may always call to discuss cases with unusual or worrisome manifestations).
- e. Any other unusual modes of transmission (e.g., sexual, transfusion, laboratory acquired)

When to Use a Commercial Clinical Laboratory for Zika Testing

Use a commercial clinical laboratory for all other patients requiring Zika testing, specifically:

- a. Not pregnant, AND
- b. Developed one or more of the typical symptoms of Zika infection (e.g., fever, maculopapular rash, arthralgia, conjunctivitis) up to 4 weeks after spending time in an area with active Zika virus transmission*.

When interpreting laboratory results, providers should understand that negative results on urine or serum Zika virus RT-PCR tests do not rule out infection.

The Health Department does not recommend testing non-pregnant travelers with no symptoms who returned from areas with active Zika transmission.*

If the provider is unable to utilize a commercial clinical laboratory or the patient is uninsured, the Health Department will continue to provide testing. Providers should call **1-866-692-3641** during business hours to request testing.

Providers should continue to report positive cases of Zika virus infection in New York City residents who are diagnosed at commercial laboratories or in other jurisdictions by logging into Reporting Central via [NYCMED](#), by mailing or faxing to 347-396-2632 the paper [Universal Reporting Form](#), or calling 1-866-692-3641.

As always, we appreciate your continued diligence and collaboration with our efforts in New York City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay K. Varma". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jay K. Varma, MD
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Disease Control, New York City Health Department

Resources

New York City Health Department: www.nyc.gov/health/zika

For non-NYC residents, see New York State Health Department: www.health.ny.gov/zika

CDC: www.cdc.gov/zika