

Zika Guidance for Physicians/Healthcare Providers (7/25/16)

Zika virus is a mosquito-borne disease caused by a flavivirus. Typical symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis but may also include myalgia, headache, retro-orbital pain, and vomiting. Illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting several days to a week; approximately 80% of those infected with the virus will not show symptoms.

As guidance is often changing as we learn more about Zika, please follow the instructions below if you have a patient you would like tested.

Healthcare providers evaluating symptomatic persons (male or female) and pregnant women (symptomatic or asymptomatic) with travel to areas where Zika virus transmission is on going, a suspect case of suspect sexual transmission of Zika, or a suspect local vector-borne transmission, should:

- Report the suspect case immediately to Public Health to determine whether Zika testing is warranted. **All requests must be approved by your district epidemiologist or DPH Epidemiology** at 404-657-2588 (during business hours) or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (after-hours). Prior to approving a patient for Zika virus testing, Public Health needs ALL the following information listed below. In the case of suspect sexual transmission, this information is needed for both the suspect case and the sexual contact who traveled. Please confirm “no travel” for suspect local transmission cases, even to other states. Specimens shipped without prior approval and/or without the appropriate DPH paperwork will not be tested.
 1. Patient Name
 2. Patient date of birth
 3. Sex (if female, pregnancy status and week of pregnancy)
 4. Patient address
 5. Country to where the patient traveled
 6. Travel dates (need specific dates)
 7. If ill, date of symptom onset
 8. Symptoms
 9. *If the patient reports they are a sexual contact of a suspect or confirmed Zika case, DPH will determine if testing is appropriate.
 10. Clinical questions may be triaged by epidemiology at any time, however laboratory requisitions can only be processed during normal business hours. **Two separate samples of at least 1 mL of serum each (red or tiger top tube) and one sample of at least 1 mL of free catch urine can be collected by your facility after hours for a suspect case and held until the next business day for processing.**
 11. DPH Epidemiology will fax the appropriate lab forms with approval codes after the patient is approved for testing.
- Record any travel (domestic or international) that occurred during the 10 days after infection for symptomatic patients.
- For symptomatic patients, counsel the patient to minimize their exposure to mosquitoes here to reduce the risk of local transmission for 3 weeks after illness onset. When indoors, patients should ensure that doors and windows are kept closed and that there are no holes in door and window screens. When outdoors, patients should wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellent containing 20-30% DEET on exposed skin. Due to warm winter temperatures, this guidance should be given year-round in Georgia.
- Order appropriate commercial laboratory testing for chikungunya and dengue for symptomatic travelers because of the similarities in clinical presentation and geographic distribution of these viruses and Zika.

If you have questions about Zika, please contact your district health department or the Epidemiology Program at Georgia Department of Public Health at 404-657-2588.

