



Date: July 27, 2020
To: Infectious Disease Physicians, Medical Officers of Health, Emergency Departments, Laboratory Microbiologists and Managers
From: Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) - ProvLab
Re: Changes to Zika Virus Serology Testing

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Messages:

Effective July 24, 2020 laboratory testing for Zika virus (ZIKV) will be changed to align with recent national recommendations as follows:

- **Testing is no longer recommended for asymptomatic pregnant females**
- Testing may be considered when travel is to an area where ZIKV is **currently reported to be** circulating for:
 - acutely ill individuals
 - symptomatic pregnant females
 - suspected congenital infections
 - ZIKV-associated clinical sequelae such as Guillain-Barre syndrome

Why this is important:

The World Health Organization statistics for Zika virus outbreaks show a significant decline globally in transmission and congenital infections after 2018. Presently, there are very few areas where the virus is circulating. Recently, PHAC (Public Health Agency of Canada) and CATMAT (Committee to Advise on Tropical Medicine and Travel) have revised their testing recommendations for categories at risk that are listed in the laboratory testing guidelines (see links below):

World Health Organization ([WHO](#))

Public Health Agency of Canada ([PHAC](#))

Committee to Advise on Tropical Medicine and Travel ([CATMAT](#))

Actions Required:

For individuals who meet the clinical and epidemiological criteria:

- Submit a **fully completed [Zoonotic Testing requisition](#)**
- Send the appropriate samples pertinent to the clinical scenarios listed in the table below

Indication for Testing	Period after onset	Sample type and Testing
Symptomatic pregnant female	≤ 12 weeks	1 SST blood for serology 1 EDTA blood & urine for molecular (NAT) testing
Acutely ill person	Onset ≤ 10 days	1 SST blood for serology 1 EDTA blood & urine for NAT
	Onset > 10 days	1 SST blood for serology
Congenital infections & other clinical scenarios	Not applicable	Consult Microbiologist/Virologist-On-Call

As the testing guidelines for Dengue and Chikungunya viruses are unchanged, follow the sample type requirement for the “acutely ill category” in the above table

The Microbiologist/Virologist reviews all arbovirus requests for relevant travel and clinical history.



Additional information is available on the updated ProvLab online [Test Directory page](#) .

This communication supersedes guidance on Zika virus testing contained in the [ProvLab bulletin](#) dated the 28th of Sept, 2016 (titled: Update on Testing for Zika, Dengue and Chikungunya Viruses). Testing guidance for Dengue and Chikungunya remains unchanged as outlined in the previous bulletin.

Microbiologist/Virologist contact information:

Calgary Site – (403) 333 4942

Edmonton Site – (780) 407 7121 (ask for Virologist-on-Call)

Inquiries and feedback:

If you have any question or comment regarding this bulletin or other issues related to arbovirus testing, please contact Dr Saugata Choudhury, Program Leader for Arboviruses and Zoonotic Viruses at saugata.choudhury@albertaprecisionlabs.ca or 403-944-4924.

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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