



# Department of Health

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**TO: Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, Local Health Departments (LHDs)**

**FROM: New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Bureau of Communicable Disease Control (BCDC) and Wadsworth Center Laboratory (WC)**

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**HEALTH ADVISORY: EXPANSION OF ZIKA VIRUS TESTING TO PREGNANT**  
**WOMEN WHO HAD UNPROTECTED SEX WITH A PARTNER WHO TRAVELED TO**  
**AN AREA WITH ACTIVE MOSQUITO-BORNE TRANSMISSION OF ZIKA VIRUS**  
*Please distribute to the Infection Control Department, Emergency Department, Infectious Disease Department, Obstetrics/Gynecology (including Nurse Practitioners and Midwives), Neurology, Family Medicine, Travel Medicine Service, Pediatrics, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Laboratory Service, Pharmacy, and all patient care areas.*  
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- On February 23, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Health Advisory that announced 14 reports of possible sexual transmission of Zika virus, including several involving pregnant women.<sup>1</sup> Information about sexual transmission of Zika virus and actions that can be taken to prevent transmission are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/hc-providers/index.html>.
- NYSDOH is expanding Zika virus testing availability to all pregnant women who, during pregnancy, had unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex with a sex partner who traveled to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus.
  - Previously, NYSDOH offered testing only to pregnant women who themselves traveled to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus during their pregnancy.
  - Testing is available regardless of whether the sex partner had symptoms consistent with Zika virus infection.
  - Infants with microcephaly or intracranial calcifications born to these non-traveling, pregnant women are also eligible for testing.
- NYSDOH is investigating one possible case of sexual transmission of Zika virus to a pregnant woman whose only known risk factor was sexual contact with a symptomatic male partner who had recently traveled to an area with local Zika virus transmission.
  - To date, 40 cases of Zika virus have been reported in NYS. The other 39 cases were diagnosed in travelers from areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission. No cases of local transmission from a mosquito bite have occurred in the State.
- In addition to the expanded groups discussed above, Zika virus testing at the WC continues to be available for:
  - Pregnant women who traveled to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus while pregnant.

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00388.asp>

- Non-pregnant women, men or children who develop (or developed) compatible symptoms during or within 4 weeks of travel to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus.
- Persons who traveled to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus and who present with Guillain-Barré syndrome.
- Infants with microcephaly or intracranial calcifications born to women who traveled to an area with active mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus while pregnant.
- **Preauthorization of testing by the LHD where the patient resides continues to be required.**  
 Contact information and hours of operation for LHDs is available at [https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/](https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/).
  - If the patient resides in another state, the healthcare providers/or facility caring for the patient should directly contact the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) at 1-888-364-4723 between 9AM and 5PM weekdays for authorization.
  - The preauthorization process applies to all patients except infants. Healthcare providers and facilities caring for these infants should directly contact the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) at 1-888-364-4723 between 9AM and 5PM weekdays for consultation and facilitation of testing or, if a NYC resident, 1-866-692-3641 anytime.
- WC will perform molecular tests which detect the presence of the virus, as well as both screening and confirmatory tests for antibodies against Zika and other related viruses. Testing is not performed on the weekends.
  - PCR will be performed on specimens that were collected either within one month of the onset of symptoms or within six weeks of travel. PCR results are reported within a few business days of specimen receipt.
  - Specimens collected between the day of the patient's return from travel up until 9 months after return will be accepted for serology. Screening serology testing takes up to 7 days to complete from date of specimen receipt. Some patients will need confirmatory testing by plaque reduction neutralization testing (PRNT) to rule out the possibility of cross reactivity due to other related viruses such as dengue. PRNT takes an additional 10-14 days because it is dependent on the length of time it takes for virus to grow in culture. For some patients, a second serum specimen may be needed at least three weeks after the first specimen was collected to quantify the rise in antibodies.
  - Testing of semen is not currently available. CDC is actively studying the incidence and duration of seminal shedding from infected men and the utility and availability of testing in this context.
- Results of Zika virus testing will be made available to the ordering provider through the submitting laboratory and/or the LHD where the patient resides. Providers can access public health consultation for assistance with interpretation of results by calling their LHD or, if a NYC resident, 1-866-692-3641.
- Hospitals and providers must report suspected cases of Zika virus and all other arboviral diseases to the LHD **where the patient resides.**

If you have any questions, please contact your LHD or the NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at [bcdc@health.ny.gov](mailto:bcdc@health.ny.gov).