

Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation Administration  
Division of Epidemiology-Disease Surveillance and Investigation

February 10, 2016

## Health Notice for Health Care Providers

### Update on Zika Virus Disease Testing

#### Summary

In the District of Columbia Department of Health (DC DOH) January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 health notice (<http://doh.dc.gov/page/health-notice>), we asked health care providers to consistently collect travel history information during the clinical evaluation of patients, and to promptly report suspected cases of travel-associated illnesses, including Zika virus disease.

The guidelines have since changed, and we wanted to share updates on the reporting and testing requirements that have been set by the Centers for Disease control and Prevention (CDC).

#### Zika Virus Disease

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#### Background

Zika is a flavivirus transmitted by mosquitoes. It is closely related to yellow fever, dengue, and West Nile Viruses and is endemic in some areas of Africa and Asia. It is transmitted by *Aedes* mosquito spp., which is found in tropical and sub-tropical areas throughout the world. The first transmission reported outside of Asia and Africa occurred in 2007.<sup>1</sup> Zika virus infection generally presents with a mild illness, characterized by low grade fever (< 38.5°C) and a maculopapular rash, but can include symptoms such as myalgias/arthralgias, headache, conjunctivitis, pain behind the eyes, and vomiting. Only one in five people infected with Zika become symptomatic. Severe disease is uncommon and no deaths have been reported.<sup>2</sup> A possible link between microcephaly and Zika virus infection is currently being investigated after an outbreak in Brazil in 2015, resulting in an increased focus on screening pregnant women who may have been exposed. The factors that may cause increased risk to the fetus are unknown and are currently being investigated.

#### Summary of updated guidelines

- When considering a diagnosis of Zika please ensure your patient traveled to a Zika-affected area or had sexual contact with someone who has recently traveled to a Zika-affected area (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/>) and review their symptom history.
- Starting February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 CDC will now offer serologic testing to **asymptomatic pregnant women** (women who do not report clinical illness consistent with Zika virus disease) who have traveled to areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission. Testing can be offered **2–12 weeks** after pregnant women return from travel.

- At this time, the CDC will not test samples from men, children, and women who are not pregnant with only a positive travel history. Patients must have a **positive travel history AND** development of **symptoms consistent with Zika** within two weeks of travel in order for testing to be performed.
- For complete details, please review the updated Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) ([http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e2er.htm?s\\_cid=mm6505e2er\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e2er.htm?s_cid=mm6505e2er_w)).
- If you have already completed and faxed a case report form to the DC DOH for a pregnant, asymptomatic woman, you do not need to complete another one.
- The CDC also released new recommendations on Zika virus and sexual transmission ([http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e1er.htm?s\\_cid=mm6505e1er\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e1er.htm?s_cid=mm6505e1er_w)).
- Please reach out to all patients you have seen regarding Zika virus that these new recommendation may impact. The DC DOH will not communicate clinical recommendations directly to patients and it is the responsibility of health care providers to pass the information along.
- Due to the small window of time that Zika virus is likely viremic, it is important to educate suspected Zika virus patients on mosquito-exposure reduction practices and decreasing the risk of sexual transmission the day they are seen. Final test results will not return until after control interventions are most effective and it is important to educate patients early to reduce the chance they will serve as a reservoir as we enter mosquito season.

### Updated procedures for providers submitting samples

- Fill out the Communicable Disease Case Report Form for suspected cases and fax it to (202) 442-8060. Please include your email on the case form.
  - For all pregnant women with a positive travel history, please draw and keep a serum sample until testing is arranged.
  - For all others, please contact the DC DOH at (202) 442 -8141 to ensure the patient qualifies for testing.
- After the case form is faxed and received by the DC DOH, you will receive an email from us with a case number and further instructions to coordinate sample pick-up for shipment to CDC.
- If you have not already, please send the email address to [DOH.EPI@dc.gov](mailto:DOH.EPI@dc.gov) of someone at your facility that will always be responsible for coordinating sample pickups. Please include the name of your facility and a phone number.
- Please let the patient know to expect a call from us once you submit the report form with their contact information.
  - **Do not** instruct patients to call us on their own.
  - We will interview all patients, even those with a positive travel history but without symptoms of Zika.
- When calling with Zika virus inquires please leave a direct number where you can be reached and not the general number for your facility. This will help expedite our response if we can call you back directly and bypass the general phone service for your facility.

- Notification to DOH should occur **the day the patient is seen** to ensure timely results and appropriate action.
- Results will be reported to the provider to communicate with the patient as soon as it is received, which has typically been 2-3 weeks after submission. The DC DOH will **NOT** report results directly to patients.

**If you have any questions regarding this important issue, you may contact the Division of Epidemiology–Disease Surveillance and Investigation:**

**Phone: (202) 442-8141 (8:15am-4:45pm) | 1-844-493-2652 (after-hours calls)**

**Fax: (202) 442-8060**

**Email: [doh.epi@dc.gov](mailto:doh.epi@dc.gov)**

#### **Additional Resources**

- Information from the CDC on Zika virus: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika>
- DCDOH Health Notice for Health Care Providers ([http://doh.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/page\\_content/attachments/Zika%20EVD%20update%20HAN%2001\\_21\\_2016%20FINAL.pdf](http://doh.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/page_content/attachments/Zika%20EVD%20update%20HAN%2001_21_2016%20FINAL.pdf))
- CDC MMWR: Update: Interim Guidelines for Pregnant Women During a Zika Virus Outbreak — United States, 2016 (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6502e1.htm>)
- CDC MMWR: Interim Guidelines for the Evaluation and Testing of Infants with Possible Congenital Zika Virus Infection — United States, 2016 (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6503e3er.htm>)
- CDC MMWR: Interim Guidelines for Prevention of Sexual Transmission of Zika Virus — United States, 2016 (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e1er.htm>)
- CDC MMWR: Possible Association Between Zika Virus Infection and Microcephaly — Brazil, 2015 (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6503e2.htm>)
- Information on the possible association with microcephaly: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/pdfs/possible-association-between-zika-virus-and-microcephaly.pdf>
- Additional instructions for submitting specimens for Zika virus testing: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceid/dvbd/specimensub/arboviral-shipping.html>
- Information on protection against mosquitoes: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2016/the-pre-travel-consultation/protection-against-mosquitoes-ticks-other-arthropods>
- Information from the CDC on the 2014 EVD outbreak in West Africa: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/>.

#### **References**

1. World Health Organization Western Pacific Region. Zika virus. (May 2015). Retrieved January 6, 2016, from: [http://www.wpro.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs\\_05182015\\_zika/en/](http://www.wpro.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs_05182015_zika/en/)
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Zika virus. (December 2015). Retrieved January 6, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>