

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

February 1, 2016

Health Notice for Health Care Providers

Update on Zika Virus Disease Testing

Summary

In the District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH) January 21, 2016 health notice (<http://doh.dc.gov/page/health-notices>) 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. We have received a number of phone calls and emails regarding Zika and wanted to share additional important points on testing requirements that have been set by the Centers for Disease control and Prevention (CDC) and guidance about reporting cases.

Zika Virus Disease

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 2007.¹ Zika virus infection generally presents with a mild illness, characterized by low grade fever ($< 38.5^{\circ}\text{C}$) and a maculopapular rash, but can include symptoms such as myalgias/arthralgias, headache, conjunctivitis, pain behind the eyes, and vomiting. Severe disease is uncommon and no deaths have been reported.²

Important points to note when evaluating patients, considering testing, and reporting cases

- When considering a diagnosis of Zika please ensure your patient traveled to a Zika-affected area (<http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/>) and review their symptom history.
- At this time the CDC will **NOT** test samples from patients 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 pregnant women with a positive travel history, additional screening measures are recommended, regardless of symptom status, and can be found in the resource below entitled “CDC MMWR: Interim Guidelines for Pregnant Women During a Zika Virus Outbreak — United States, 2016.”

- Remember to fill out the Communicable Disease Case Report Form for suspected cases (<http://doh.dc.gov/publication/communicable-disease-case-report-form>) and fax it to (202) 442-8060.
- 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 inquiries 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 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

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)
- CDC MMWR: 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>)
- 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/
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Zika virus. (December 2015). Retrieved January 6, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>