Florida Department of Health
Bureau of Public Health Laboratories

Zika Testing – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What specimen types do you accept for testing?
   a. Serum
   b. Urine
   c. From a birth only: CSF from the infant, amniotic fluid, birth cord blood, and fresh placenta
   d. From an asymptomatic pregnant woman, serum only

2. How long after onset of symptoms can the specimens be collected?
   a. 21 days (serum and urine)
   b. If beyond 21 days, serum only
   c. Not applicable to asymptomatic pregnant women

3. What are the minimum volumes that the laboratory needs for testing, if there is a problem getting the requested volumes:
   a. Serum: 1-2 mls
   b. Urine: 1-2 mls (max 5 mls)
   c. Infant CSF: 0.5-2 mls
   d. Birth cord blood: 1-2 mls
   e. Fresh Placenta: 1-2 cm³

4. For serum, what kind of blood draw tube should we use?
   a. Serum/red or tiger top tube

5. Will the BPHL provide sample collection supplies?
   a. No, the sample provider is responsible for obtaining collection supplies.

6. Will you accept urine in specimen containers containing additives or preservatives?
   a. No, just use a sterile leak-proof container. Please ship no more than 5 mls of urine and ensure that the container lid is secured completely to avoid leakages. Also ship the container upright to avoid spillages.

7. Can urine alone be submitted?
   a. Not at this time. The laboratory is in the process of evaluating urine as a specimen type, therefore a serum sample must also be submitted.
8. How should we store specimens prior to shipment?
   a. 4°C is best for storage

9. Where/how do we store specimens over the weekend for shipment Monday?
   a. Serum and urine can be stored at 4°C for up to 48 hours and then shipment on ice for overnight delivery. For longer storage, serum can be frozen, but do not freeze urine.

10. How should we ship specimens to the BPHL?
    a. Overnight, Category B

11. Will the BPHL provide Category B shipping materials?
    a. No, the sample provider is responsible for obtaining shipping materials.

12. Where do we ship specimens?
    Unless otherwise instructed by the Bureau of Epidemiology,
    a. The following counties should ship to BPHL-Tampa
    b. The following counties should ship to BPHL-Jacksonville
       i. Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Broward, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Indian River, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Martin, Nassau, Okeechobee, Orange, Palm Beach, Putnam, Seminole, St Johns, St Lucie, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla
    c. The counties who ship to BPHL-Miami for shipping to BPHL-Tampa should arrange arrival no later than 1:30 PM for shipping to BPHL-Tampa

13. Do submissions to BPHL require prior approval by the Bureau of Epidemiology?
    a. Yes, contact the epidemiology department at your local health department.

14. Will BPHL pay for the shipping costs associated with sending the specimens?
    a. No, the sample provider is responsible for paying for shipping costs.

15. What testing is being performed at BPHL?
    a. BPHL at Jacksonville and Tampa can perform real-time PCR and IgM ELISA on the samples.
16. How are the PCR and ELISA results reported?
   a. **PCR** – Zika virus detected; Zika virus not detected; Zika virus equivocal; Zika virus inconclusive
   b. **ELISA** – IgM Positive; IgM negative; IgM equivocal; IgM indeterminate

17. What is the TAT for PCR testing once a sample is received at the lab?
   a. 24-48 hours

18. What is the TAT for IgM testing once a sample is received at the lab?
   a. 1-5 days

19. How are the results reported?
   a. Results are submitted back to the submitting epidemiologist at the health department. The epidemiologist will immediately forward results to the healthcare provider.

20. What testing is being performed by CDC?
   a. Additional confirmatory testing of serum when warranted such as serum neutralization.
   b. Tissues related to a birth (placenta, umbilical cord, fetal tissues, etc.)

21. Should the tissues be fixed?
   a. CDC requests both formalin fixed and frozen tissues. If it is not possible to provide both types of tissue, prioritize formalin fixed tissues.
   b. Fixed tissues should be stored and shipped at room temperature.
   c. Frozen tissues should be shipped with dry ice.