



**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 cm<sup>3</sup>*
  
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*
    - i. *Bay, Calhoun, Charlotte, Citrus, Collier, Dade, Desoto, Escambia, Glades, Gulf, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Holmes, Jackson, Lake, Lee, Levy, Manatee, Monroe, Okaloosa, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Sumter, Walton, Washington*
  
  - 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?
- PCR – Zika virus detected; Zika virus not detected; Zika virus equivocal; Zika virus inconclusive*
  - 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?
- 24-48 hours*
18. What is the TAT for IgM testing once a sample is received at the lab?
- 1-5 days*
19. How are the results reported?
- 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?
- Additional confirmatory testing of serum when warranted such as serum neutralization.*
  - Tissues related to a birth (placenta, umbilical cord, fetal tissues, etc.)*
21. Should the tissues be fixed?
- CDC requests both formalin fixed and frozen tissues. If it is not possible to provide both types of tissue, prioritize formalin fixed tissues.*
  - Fixed tissues should be stored and shipped at room temperature.*
  - Frozen tissues should be shipped with dry ice.*