

## Summary

- Key facts about Zika
- Ministry of Health has updated its Zika virus testing

14 August 2017

## Zika Health Professional Advice: update

**Zika is a notifiable disease. The Ministry of Health recently updated its Zika [webpage](#) aimed at health professionals with new Zika virus testing information.**

### Zika key facts

- 4 out of 5 cases are asymptomatic.
- Transmitted mainly by infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes - not found in New Zealand.
- Can be sexually transmitted - travel history of sexual partners is relevant for suspected cases.
- Can be transmitted from infected pregnant women to their babies *in utero*. Check pregnancy status in women of reproductive age in suspected cases.
- The Ministry of Health recommends that pregnant women or those planning to become pregnant in the near term, and men planning a family, should defer travel to areas with active Zika transmission.
- For information on areas with current Zika transmission see the [European CDC webpage](#).

### Zika Testing

Reverse-transcriptase PCR (RT-PCR) can be used to detect Zika virus during the first week after onset of symptoms in serum, and the first two weeks in whole blood or urine.

Seek advice from a microbiologist after two weeks following the onset of symptoms.

Use 4ml whole blood (EDTA) and/ or 5ml urine (sterile container) samples.

Document on the laboratory form travel history, sexual contact history and pregnancy status (if applicable).

- **Pregnant women (asymptomatic/symptomatic):**
  - **Within two weeks** after onset of symptoms: **Whole blood or urine PCR**
  - **Within two weeks** of last possible exposure: **Whole blood or urine PCR**

- **Symptomatic persons (with exposure history):**
  - **Within two weeks** after onset of symptoms: **Whole blood or urine PCR**
- **Asymptomatic persons with recent travel to a Zika affected area - NO testing advised, instead:**
  - Men:
    - Use condoms / abstain from sex for 6 months post return from travel
    - Avoid getting female partner pregnant for 6 months post return OR abstain for duration of pregnancy if partner pregnant
  - Women:
    - Use barrier methods / abstain from sex for 2 months post return from travel
    - Avoid pregnancy for 6 months if male partner has also travelled to Zika affected areas
- **Serological testing**
  - Zika virus serology may be difficult to interpret and should involve a discussion with a microbiologist prior to testing. This is because:
    - IgM antibodies may stay in the body for months after infection. Therefore, a positive IgM in a pregnant woman may be due to recent infection or one acquired before pregnancy.
    - Extensive cross-reactivity occurs with other flaviviruses, particularly Dengue virus.

**Notify all Zika cases to the Medical Officer of Health in Auckland (ph. 09 6234600)**

Provide details of clinical signs and symptoms, pregnancy status, travel history (country/dates) and laboratory results.

**For more information on Zika virus:**

See ARPHS 'Zika Health Professional Advice' updated 14 August 2017. This is available at: [http://www.arphs.govt.nz/Portals/0/ARPHS%20HPA%20-%20Zika\\_Full%2017-08-14.pdf](http://www.arphs.govt.nz/Portals/0/ARPHS%20HPA%20-%20Zika_Full%2017-08-14.pdf)

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