

NCSLPH Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Zika Virus Testing

1. Where can I find North Carolina's latest guidance?

The latest guidance is posted on the NCSLPH website at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/>. Other useful information can be found at North Carolina's Division of Public Health page at <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/zika/> and CDC's Zika response page at <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>.

2. What is the process for submitting specimens to NCSLPH?

Approval from the Communicable Disease Branch is no longer required for submission of specimens. Refer to the latest guidance posted (<http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/>). The Physician Attestation statement at the bottom of submission form **DHHS #3445** must be signed by the ordering provider as verification that the patient meets CDC established testing criteria.

3. What type of sample do I collect and send?

At this time, serum is required, but other specimens such as whole blood, urine, CSF, and amniotic fluid may be collected and submitted along with the serum to enhance the detection of Zika virus infection. Please refer to the guidance posted at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/>.

Blood should be collected in a red top or serum separator tube. The NCSLPH recommends that blood tubes requiring centrifugation be placed in an o-ring-sealed safety cup and that manipulation of serum (such as pouring off the serum into a well-constructed plastic screw-capped vial) be performed in a Class II biosafety cabinet. The serum volume required for submission is 2-5 ml. Label all specimens to be submitted for testing with patient first and last name, date of birth or another unique identifier, and collection date.

***If other prenatal testing such as rubella, hepatitis B, HIV, and/or syphilis is sent to the SLPH for testing at the same time as the request for Zika testing, please submit all samples and forms on the same patient together and separate from other patient samples.

4. Where is testing being conducted?

NCSLPH is currently conducting serologic testing for chikungunya and Zika virus and coordinating with CDC for the confirmatory testing of any equivocal or presumptive positive samples. If indicated, dengue serology is still being conducted by CDC. Plans are underway to implement dengue virus serologic testing at NCSLPH in July 2017. PCR testing for chikungunya, Zika virus, and dengue is performed at NCSLPH.

5. Where can patients for Zika virus testing have specimens collected?

Ideally, specimens should be collected by the provider who is requesting Zika virus testing. If the provider/facility where the patient is seen does not have the ability to collect specimens, they should contact their usual laboratory services provider to arrange for collection and submission. Note that the provider must complete the NCSLPH special serology submission form (DHHS #3445, <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/Forms/3445-SpecialSerology-20160816.pdf>) and sign the Physician Attestation statement. It is not necessary to submit the CDC DASH form with every sample. If the sample needs to be referred to CDC for further testing, NCSLPH laboratory staff will contact the submitter to request the CDC DASH form. Complete the DHHS #3445 form and send with the patient if they are referred elsewhere for specimen collection. Providers who are having trouble arranging specimen collection can contact the Communicable Disease nurse at their local health department for guidance; DO NOT send patients to the Local Health Department for sample collection unless prior arrangements have been made.

6. What is the Packaging and Shipping requirement for Zika Virus test samples?

The NCSLPH recommends that specimens are packaged and shipped to meet the requirements for Category B infectious substances. Samples should be triple packaged (leak-proof primary and secondary containers with a rigid outer container). The NCSLPH submission form should be placed between the secondary and outer container. The outside of package must be labeled with UN3373, Biological Substance Category B, and also contain shipper name and address, Responsible Person (Shipper) including contact information (phone number), and the package should be addressed as follows:

Attention: Virology/Serology Unit
North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health
4312 District Drive
Raleigh, NC 27607-5490

NOTE: Serum specimens for Zika testing require transport on cold packs. Transport conditions for other specimen types can be found in the guidance posted at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/>.

7. Is NCSLPH providing packaging and shipping materials?

At this time, NCSLPH is not providing packaging and shipping materials. You may work with your Local Health Department or purchase supplies directly from a vendor.

8. How do we send specimens to NCSLPH?

You may work with your Local Health Department to send specimens using the statewide courier or specimens can be directly shipped to NCSLPH using a professional courier service.

9. What is the expected Turnaround Time from receipt of Zika virus specimen(s) to completion of results?

The estimated turnaround time is approximately six (6) business days for chikungunya and Zika virus testing (molecular and serological testing) and dengue molecular testing; 3+ weeks for dengue virus serology and confirmatory testing performed at CDC.

10. Which NCSLPH submission form do I use?

The NCSLPH submission form is DHHS #3445 and is available at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/Forms/3445-SpecialSerology-20160816.pdf>. Please check the "Zika" box." The ordering provider must also sign the Physician Attestation statement at the bottom of the form.

11. How do I obtain the CDC DASH form and what do I do if I'm having trouble opening it?

The CDC DASH form is posted at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/Forms/NC-CDC-50-34-Form-120616.pdf>. If specimens are being submitted for immunohistochemistry, please contact the NCSLPH for assistance in completing the DASH form. If you can't open it directly from this link, you need to open and work with this file using the free Adobe Reader (deselect the "Optional offers"). Unless you are certain you are using a browser with Adobe Reader as the enabled PDF viewer plug-in, we recommend you download the form from the NCSLPH website at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/forms.asp#specimen>. Save it to your machine and then open with Adobe Reader.

Why? The default PDF viewer plug-in for certain browsers, such as Chrome and Firefox, will not open the file.

Please note the form MUST be filled out electronically for CDC submission. Print completed form and submit this when requested by NCSLPH.

12. What information needs to be included on the DASH form?

The CDC DASH form should include as much information as possible. The following information is required prior to testing at CDC: symptom onset date, specimen collection date, clinical summary, state of illness, travel history, yellow fever/JE vaccination history, and pregnancy status for female patients.