

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 is required for submission of specimens. Refer to the latest guidance posted (<http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/>) and contact the Communicable Disease Branch 24/7 number at 919-733-3419 or your local health department to facilitate testing for Zika virus. The Communicable Disease Branch or your local health department will provide a Zika Report Form.

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

At this time, serum is required, but other specimens may be collected and submitted along with the serum to enhance the detection of Zika virus infection. For other acceptable specimen types, 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.

4. Where is testing being conducted?

NCSLPH is currently conducting testing for chikungunya and Zika virus and coordinating with CDC for the confirmatory testing of any presumptive positive samples for Zika. If needed, dengue serology is still being conducted by CDC. Plans are underway to implement dengue virus serologic testing at NCSLPH as soon as possible.

5. Where can patients approved 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 the CDC DASH (<http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/forms.asp#zika>) form. Have these forms completed and sent 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 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). NCSLPH and DASH submission forms 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 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." Also indicate the individual at CDB that has provided approval for testing.

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

To assist submitters in completing the CDC DASH forms templates for each specimen type are posted at <http://slph.ncpublichealth.com/forms.asp#zika>. If specimens are being submitted for immunohistochemistry, please contact the NCSLPH for assistance in completing the DASH forms. 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 with specimens and the DHHS #3445.

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: symptom onset date, specimen collection date, clinical summary, state of illness, travel history, yellow fever/JE vaccination history, and pregnancy status for female patients.