



DATE:	July 27, 2017
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Rachel Levine, MD, Acting Secretary of Health and Physician General
SUBJECT:	Zika Virus: Recommendations for Zika Testing
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	Statewide
COUNTY:	Statewide
MUNICIPALITY:	Statewide
ZIP CODE:	Statewide

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Background

Zika virus is transmitted by infected *Aedes* species mosquitoes. An outbreak of Zika virus disease began in May 2015 in Brazil and spread throughout South America, Central America, the Caribbean and southern areas of North America. Since January 1, 2016, a total of 225 cases of confirmed or probable Zika virus infection have been reported among Pennsylvania residents. Symptoms of Zika virus infection include rash, fever, conjunctivitis, headache, joint pain, and muscle pain. However, it is estimated that 80% of persons infected with Zika virus do not have any symptoms.

Although Zika virus symptoms are generally mild or absent, infection during pregnancy is associated with birth defects including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities and developmental delays. For this reason, it is important to identify pregnant women who have evidence of Zika virus infection so that the pregnancy and infant may be monitored for abnormalities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have released updated testing guidelines indicating that Zika virus testing for asymptomatic pregnant women is no longer routinely recommended, but that healthcare providers should defer to the guidance of their state and local health departments. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) continues to recommend that all pregnant women with potential Zika virus exposure receive laboratory testing. Possible exposures include traveling to areas with local mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus (<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>) and sexual contact with a person infected with Zika virus. For testing to be useful, possible Zika virus exposure should have occurred within the past 12 weeks. Zika virus testing is available thorough commercial laboratories and the state public health laboratory. For assistance with testing and other Zika virus-related questions, contact PADOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

Categories of Health Alert Network messages:
Health Alert Requires immediate action or attention; highest level of importance
Health Advisory May not require immediate action; provides important information for a specific incident or situation
Health Update Unlikely to require immediate action; provides updated information regarding an incident or situation
HAN Info Service Does not require immediate action; provides general public health information

This information is current as of July 27, 2017, but may be modified in the future.