

Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH)

Requirements for Zika Testing Submissions



Testing Approval

- Contact PDPH at (215) 685-6742 and ask to speak to a Surveillance Coordinator for arboviral testing assistance/approval. PDPH generally follows CDC guidelines to approve arboviral testing at public health reference laboratories.
- Prior to contacting PDPH for arboviral infection testing assistance:
 - Please complete the [PA Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories \(BOL\) Zika Virus Test Submission Form](#). This new form replaces both the CDC 50.34 specimen form and BOL test slip.
 - Please have the following information ready:
 - Patient contact information and demographics
 - Current address and telephone number
 - Date of birth
 - Gender
 - Country of birth
 - Illness onset date
 - Brief clinical history
 - Date of specimen collection
 - Exposure history (travel, possible sexual or other contact with a returning traveler). For a patient who traveled, provide:
 - City, Country recently visited
 - Duration in days
 - Date returned to Philadelphia
 - History of arboviral infection (dengue, West Nile, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, other arboviral encephalitis)
 - History of arboviral vaccination (yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, dengue, tickborne encephalitis)
 - For females of childbearing age, pregnancy status
 - Expected due date
 - Gestational age
 - Obstetrician name and telephone number

Specimen Collection, Storage, and Testing:

Collect 3 mL of serum, so testing for Zika virus and other arboviruses can be performed. Use a red-top or serum separator tube for specimen collection and then centrifuge the specimen, so the serum is separated. Aseptically transfer serum to a sterile tube.

Urine can be tested if it is collected within 14 days of illness onset or for asymptomatic pregnant women, last exposure date. The urine specimen must be accompanied by a serum specimen from the patient or it will not be tested. Collect 3 mL and no more than 20 mL of urine in a sterile urine specimen container with a screw-top lid. Ensure the lid is securely tightened and seal with parafilm. Place the sealed urine specimen in a specimen transport bag and seal.

Specimens should be kept cool or frozen. The samples should be stored in a refrigerator while awaiting transfer to PDPH. During transport, the specimen should be placed in an insulated container with blue ice packs. Additional blue ice packs should be used in the summer to ensure specimen integrity in hot weather.

PDPH will arrange for specimen pick-up from your facility if needed. This service is available for Philadelphia residents and patients seen by healthcare providers in the City of Philadelphia. PDPH will forward the specimen to the PA Department of Health Laboratory. Specimens may then be forwarded to CDC's Arbovirus Diagnostic Laboratory in Fort Collins, CO for confirmatory testing. Testing results are usually available 2–4 weeks after submission and will be forwarded to the ordering provider.