

Zika Virus Testing Information.

Zika virus testing in NSW is performed by the NSW Arbovirus Reference Laboratory at ICPMR - Pathology West. SydPath will refer all appropriate requests / specimens for Zika virus testing to the reference laboratory.

In order to facilitate specimen referral & appropriate testing, please include all relevant information on the request form, which at a minimum should include:

1. Country(s) visited (See Australian Government Department of Health website for up to date list of affected countries
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-zika-countries.htm>)
2. Date(s) and duration of travel
3. Clinical symptoms (or please state if asymptomatic)
4. Whether or not the patient or their partner is pregnant or planning pregnancy

Symptoms compatible with Zika virus infection may include a low-grade fever, arthralgia (notably of small joints of hands and feet, with possible swollen joints), myalgia, headache, retro-ocular headaches, conjunctivitis, cutaneous maculopapular rash, and post-infection asthenia. The diagnosis of Zika virus infection in pregnancy, fetal infection, or neonatal infection should be made in consultation with an expert.

Appropriate specimen types for testing include:

1. Blood for serology (serum gel tube) \geq 5 days after exposure. Paired acute and convalescent specimens at least 14 days apart are recommended, including at least one specimen collected \geq 4 weeks after last possible exposure to allow time for antibodies to develop.
2. Blood for PCR (EDTA tube) if within 2 weeks of last potential exposure
3. Urine for PCR (sterile yellow-topped urine jar) if within 2-4 weeks after last possible exposure
4. Other specimens from other sites may be suitable including amniotic fluid, tissue

Other causes of fever and/or other infective symptoms in returned travellers should also be considered and excluded, including malaria, typhoid, dengue fever, measles, influenza etc.

National and international Zika virus testing and management guidelines are continuously being updated in light of new information – please see the Australian Government Department of Health website for more information.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-zikavirus>

Please contact clinical microbiologist / registrar for further information or advice on (02) 8382 9196.