



**PROVINCIAL LABORATORY
MEDICINE SERVICES**
Provincial Health Services Authority

BCCDC Public Health Lab



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 11, 2025

TO: All users of Zika virus serology testing at BCCDC

RE: Discontinuation of Zika virus serology test

Dear colleagues,

The Zika virus (ZIKV) is a single-stranded RNA virus belonging to the *Flaviviridae* family. Laboratory diagnosis is available through both PCR and serology tests. Prior to May 2023, serology testing was recommended for individuals who had met the established testing criteria but were outside the acute phase of the disease.

However, data accumulated since the widespread emergence of ZIKV has shown that IgM antibodies can persist for extended periods and cross-reactivity with other viruses makes interpretation challenging. Additionally, IgG antibodies may also cross-react with other flaviviruses such as Dengue and West Nile viruses. As a result, updated National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) guidelines no longer recommend serology testing for ZIKV (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/zika-virus/health-professionals.html>) and they have discontinued this service.

In line with the NML's recommendations, the BCCDC Public Health Laboratory will discontinue Zika virus serology testing effective immediately. Nucleic acid testing (NAT) will be performed for patients or their sexual partners who have recently traveled to a Zika-endemic area and present with acute symptoms consistent with Zika virus infection. Pregnant individuals, or their sexual partners, with a history of travel to a Zika-endemic area—regardless of symptoms—will be eligible for NAT up to 12 weeks post-exposure.

In BC, we recommend both serology and PCR only for the following situations and travel to a Zika-endemic area:

- For cases suspected or confirmed ZIKV infection in pregnancy and fetal anomaly on antenatal ultrasound (e.g., microcephaly, CNS calcifications, and arthrogryposis)
- For infants born to a woman with confirmed or suspected ZIKV infection during pregnancy, or with suspected congenital infection.
- For these situations, we will refer-out ZIKV serology testing to another reference laboratory.

Clinical and travel history must be provided before testing. To submit this information, please call 604-707-2628 or fax the patient details to 604-707-2602. Samples will be discarded if the required history is not provided within one month.

Thank you,

Muhammad Morshed, BSc, MSc, PhD, SCCM
Clinical Microbiologist & Program Head
Zoonotic Diseases and Emerging Pathogens
BCCDC Public Health Laboratory

Linda M. N. Hoang, MSc, MD, DTM&H, FRCPC
Medical Microbiologist & Medical Director
BCCDC Public Health Laboratory