

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ZIKA VIRUS TESTING



For Pregnant Women Who Have Ongoing Exposure to Zika but No Symptoms

If you or your sex partner live in an area with risk of Zika or frequently travel to such an area, you may have been exposed to Zika during pregnancy or before you became pregnant. You may have questions about Zika and you may want to know how to find out if you've been infected. Keep reading to learn more.

Zika testing is complex

In general, testing for Zika can include looking for Zika genetic material (pieces of the virus called RNA) and antibodies that the body would make to fight a Zika infection.

- Testing for Zika genetic material is recommended for you because it can tell your doctor if you were recently infected with Zika.
- Testing for Zika antibodies is not routinely recommended for pregnant women who have ongoing exposure to Zika but no symptoms because the results cannot be interpreted. We know that Zika antibodies can stay in the body for several months. If you lived in or frequently traveled to an area where local mosquitoes spread Zika, you may have been infected before pregnancy. This means you may have already developed antibodies against Zika before you became pregnant. Because of this, Zika antibody test results may not tell your doctor if you were infected in the past or if you were infected more recently during your current pregnancy. This means that these results would not tell us if your pregnancy is at risk from Zika infection.



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Testing Process

Testing for Zika genetic material, RNA, is recommended for pregnant women without symptoms who live in or frequently travel to an area with risk of Zika. Because you have ongoing exposure to Zika, you may receive up to three Zika tests at various points throughout your pregnancy.

Your doctor or other healthcare provider will order a test to look for Zika genetic material, RNA, which can be in blood and urine.

- If you test positive for Zika RNA, it means that you may have recently been infected with Zika.
- If you test negative, no Zika RNA was detected. A negative test may mean that you have never been infected with Zika. However, it may also mean that you had Zika, but the virus is no longer in your body. Therefore, a negative test cannot rule out a recent Zika infection.



Testing Results

Positive test results

Testing positive for Zika during pregnancy lets your doctor or other healthcare provider know to watch your pregnancy more closely. This means you might have more ultrasounds or other tests to check the growth and development of your fetus and check for Zika infection.

Not clearly positive or negative test results

Sometimes, the test results aren't clearly positive or negative. If this happens, your doctor or other healthcare provider may choose to follow the CDC recommendations for a positive test result, meaning he or she might do more ultrasounds or other tests to monitor the pregnancy.

Negative test results

Your doctor or other healthcare provider may check the growth and development of your fetus during an ultrasound and check for any signs of Zika virus infection. If there are no signs of Zika infection, you will get routine prenatal care, which is what CDC recommends. If your doctor or other healthcare provider sees signs of Zika infection during an ultrasound, then you may need additional tests.

