

# PRETEST COUNSELING CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

## FOR ASYMPTOMATIC PREGNANT WOMEN WITH ONGOING EXPOSURE TO ZIKA



This guide describes recommendations for conducting pretesting counseling for asymptomatic pregnant women with ongoing exposure to Zika. CDC recommends Zika testing for asymptomatic pregnant women with ongoing exposure to Zika (meaning they live in or frequently travel to [an area with risk of Zika](#)). This material includes sample scripts to guide discussions with your patients about the complexity of Zika testing and the testing process with patients. Because a lot of content is outlined for discussion, make additional information available to support messaging and ensure that patients understand what they are being told.

**Pregnant women coming in for Zika testing may feel worried or anxious. Support them by providing them with clear and easy-to-understand information, avoiding technical terms and expressing empathy by acknowledging their concerns and feelings during pretesting counseling.**

### Provide the patient with information on the complexity of Zika testing.

You may be at risk for getting Zika at any time during your pregnancy because you (*replace “you” with “your sex partner” as appropriate*) live in (*replace “live in” with “frequently travel to” as appropriate*) an area with risk of Zika. Many people who get infected with Zika do not have symptoms, so you could get infected and not know you have Zika.

Because Zika infection during pregnancy can cause birth defects, I will test you for Zika during your pregnancy. You may be tested for Zika three times; we will perform the first test during this visit. The second and third tests will happen during routine prenatal care visits during your pregnancy.

Before we begin, I would like to tell you what to expect throughout this process.

### Inform the patient that it can be challenging to understand test results and provide them with information on the type of test you will be conducting.

It can be hard to understand Zika test results for a number of reasons. The type of test that is recommended for you requires a blood and urine sample. This test will look for Zika virus genetic material. Results from this test may or may not tell us if you’ve been infected with Zika, which I’ll explain in a minute. I am going to start today’s testing process by ordering this test that looks for genetic material of Zika, known as RNA.

*Ask the patient if she has any questions before you move forward with providing information on the testing process.*

### Inform patients of what each possible test result could mean for their pregnancy

Now we’ll go over what each test result could mean for your pregnancy.

#### If Zika test results are positive.

If you test positive for Zika RNA, this means you may have recently been infected with Zika virus and I will need to watch your pregnancy more closely. I may do more ultrasounds or other tests to check for your fetus’s growth and development.

#### If Zika test results are not clearly positive or negative.

Sometimes test results will not come back as a clear negative or positive. If this happens, I’d rather be cautious and still do more ultrasounds and test you at least two more times during your pregnancy.

#### If Zika test results are negative.

If your test results are negative, it means that no Zika RNA was detected. This could mean that you have never been infected with Zika, or it could mean that you previously had Zika and the virus is no longer in your body.

A negative result does not mean that you are not at risk of becoming infected in the future. I will test you two more times during your pregnancy. If there are still no signs of Zika after these additional tests, we will continue with routine prenatal care. If you test positive at a later date (refer above to “If Zika test results are positive”).