

ALERT: The bottom line* on Zika Virus and Pregnancy

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Peterborough County-City
HEALTH UNIT
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ATTENTION: Healthcare Providers

Given the unresolved uncertainty about Zika virus and its role in causing fetal anomalies, a precautionary approach is being recommended.

Pregnant women have been advised to postpone or cancel travel to countries in Central and South America where Zika is circulating. For an up to date list of these countries, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) website (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca) and on the left sidebar under "Travel Health" there is a February 3, 2016 notice entitled [Zika virus infection in the Americas](#). This link is also available on our website at www.pcchu.ca under [For Professionals | Health Professionals | Alerts](#) and click on [Health Canada Travel Notices](#) on the right sidebar below "Resources".

As of February 9, 2016, all asymptomatic pregnant women who have spent time in one of these countries can be tested with Zika virus serology 2 to 12 weeks after returning home. For information on testing, please visit www.publichealthontario.ca and click on [Zika virus infection](#) under hot topics where you will find a sub-section entitled "Laboratory testing information". A link to this webpage is also available on our website www.pcchu.ca under [For Professionals | Health Professionals | Alerts](#) and click on the [Public Health Ontario – Zika virus infection](#) link dated February 10, 2016.

If your pregnant patient or her sexual partner are ill with compatible symptoms, such as fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache, following a possible exposure, then PCR testing is recommended.

If considering Zika virus testing in other clinical situations, call the Public Health Ontario Laboratories Customer Service Centre at 1-877-604-4567.

Should Zika infection be confirmed in pregnancy, it is advised that your patient be referred to a fetal medicine specialist who can determine whether amniocentesis for PCR testing should be performed. Additionally, if you detect fetal anomalies and the mother has risk factors for maternal Zika infection, please advise the fetal medicine specialist to whom you are referring so that appropriate testing can be done. Visit our website or go to PHAC's Committee to Advise on Tropical Medicine and Travel (CATMAT) website (same link as noted above) and do a search for "CATMAT". Here you will find an alphabetical table of CATMAT statements and recommendations, scroll down to the Zika virus link to access the [Canadian Recommendation on the Treatment and Prevention of Zika Virus](#). This is also available on our website under the February 10, 2016 alert webpage as noted above.

* As of February 10, 2016! Subject to change as more information becomes available! Check our website!!

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