

Dear BIA colleagues,

No doubt you are all receiving many queries regarding the testing of semen samples for men with either pregnant partners, or partners trying to conceive. You will be aware that there is no mention of semen testing in either the interim RCOG/PHE guidance or the RCGP/PHE guidance for primary care. However, we do have some capacity for Zika PCR testing of semen at RIPL. Therefore I am emailing to explain how we would like your help, as the local Infection specialists, in utilising that capacity most effectively.

From now (26/2/16) until further notice, please consider testing to be indicated as follows:

- For a man with **current** Zika-like symptoms (that began whilst in an affected country or within 2/52 of leaving) AND whose partner is **pregnant**
  - Please send a **urine** sample in addition to the **serum** and **EDTA plasma** samples
  - The rationale for this is that there is accumulating evidence that viral RNA remains detectable in urine for longer than in blood
  - There is no need to contact RIPL to discuss such a case but please state on the request form that the patient's partner is pregnant
- For a man with **previous** Zika-like symptoms (that began whilst in an affected country or within 2/52 of leaving) AND whose partner is **pregnant**
  - Please contact RIPL (see below) to discuss the case
  - If testing is agreed, then send **semen only** for PCR testing
- For **asymptomatic** partners of pregnant women
  - Don't test. Give guidance as below

For up to date travel advice for pregnant women (and their partners), please refer to guidance from NaTHNaC: <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/zika-virus-update-and-advice-for-travellers-including-pregnant-women/>

In regard to current advice on avoidance of sexual transmission, please refer to the guidance on the main PHE Zika page: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/zika-virus>

We would expect that you, the local Infection specialists, would be able to address most GP and local obstetric Zika queries, but for those you can't, *and to discuss semen testing as above*, please contact the Zika registrar at RIPL on 01980 619 659 (9am – 5pm, Mon-Fri) rather than the usual RIPL contact number. As ever, for immediate management/diagnostic advice on an *acutely sick patient*, please use the IFS number.

Note that, for now, the above testing indications are to be applied *only* to the partners of pregnant women and not to the partners of women who are trying to conceive. We may be able to extend this testing in the future. Note also that if the request form is inadequately completed or if a semen sample is submitted without prior discussion with RIPL, we may save the sample(s) without testing.

**This supplementary guidance about testing of the partners of pregnant women is NOT going to be published more widely.** If you have generic queries about it, please email our current Zika registrar: [dan.cooper@phe.gov.uk](mailto:dan.cooper@phe.gov.uk) (Patient identifying information must not be included.)

Thank you very much for your help.