



**HEALTH ALERT**  
**Updated Zika Testing Guidelines**  
**April 2, 2018**

**Summary**

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has updated its statewide testing guidance for asymptomatic pregnant women based on local and national trends and increasing scientific knowledge of the disease and the limitations of available tests. These changes are explained below. Testing guidance for symptomatic individuals has not changed.

**Zika Testing in High-Risk Areas**

- **New: Test asymptomatic pregnant women with ongoing risk of possible Zika virus exposure OR residing in Cameron, Hidalgo, Kinney, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata counties three times during pregnancy using PCR only.\***
  - Previously, the recommendation was to test asymptomatic pregnant women in Cameron, Hidalgo, Kinney, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willacy, and Zapata counties with both PCR and IgM.

**Updated Statewide Testing Guidelines:**

- **New: Test asymptomatic pregnant women with recent possible exposure to Zika virus but no ongoing exposure (i.e. travelers): test as soon as possible up to 12 weeks after exposure using PCR only.**
  - Previous guidance recommended both PCR and IgM testing.

\* Ideally, testing should occur at the first prenatal visit and each subsequent trimester. Repeated PCR testing is not recommended after an initial positive PCR test result during pregnancy.

DSHS continues to recommend that healthcare providers consult with their local health department or DSHS Regional Office to facilitate appropriate test selection and submission of specimens. Preconception counseling should be provided to patients contemplating having a baby. The current

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2

comprehensive guidance on Zika testing can be found at <http://texaszika.org/healthcareprof.htm>.

### **Additional Precautions**

DSHS recommends that all Texans continue to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites while traveling to areas where Zika is circulating. This is particularly important for women who are or may become pregnant and their sexual partners.

### **For More Information**

Texas-specific information and links to CDC resources: [TexasZika.org](http://TexasZika.org).