



**State of Louisiana**  
Louisiana Department of Health  
Office of Public Health

March 1, 2018

To: Office of Public Health (OPH) Laboratory Submitters

From: Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section (ID Epi)

Re: Updates to the Instructions for Collecting and Shipping Arboviral Samples

The OPH Laboratory is now applying stricter standards for accepting clinical specimens that are transported to the laboratory for testing. Samples now have to be received at the OPH Laboratory at acceptable refrigeration temperatures, or they will be rejected for testing. In an attempt to decrease the number of samples that will be rejected for testing, ID Epi has updated the Instructions for Collecting and Shipping Arboviral Samples.

ID Epi is now requesting that all samples collected for arboviral testing be refrigerated and shipped at 2-8°C. Samples should be placed in an insulated container and shipped with two frozen ice packs, top and bottom, but wrapped in a thick barrier (i.e., bubble wrap or thick pads) to avoid direct contact. Refrigerated samples should not be shipped with dry ice nor should frozen samples be shipped to the OPH Laboratory effective immediately.

When testing for Zika virus, dengue testing should also be performed. Dengue samples have to be received at the OPH Laboratory within 48 hours of collection. For this reason, collection of serology samples on Fridays is no longer recommended. Outstanding samples will be rejected for dengue IgM testing. Testing of whole blood and amniotic fluid will be addressed on a case by case basis, so please contact ID Epi to consult with an epidemiologist about collection information.

We apologize about any inconvenience or burden that these updates place on your facility. This letter aims to simplify the transition as we adhere to the standards set forward by the OPH Laboratory. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact ID Epi at (504) 568-8313.

## Instructions for Collecting and Shipping Arboviral Samples

**MUST HAVE APPROVAL FROM ID EPI BEFORE SHIPMENT**

### Serum: REFRIGERATE samples at 2-8°C †

- Draw blood in a serum separator tube. Follow manufacturer instructions for clot and centrifuge times.
- Aliquot at least 2 mL of serum off the clot and store in a sterile, screw cap tube. Refrigerate at 2-8°C.
- Complete [Lab Form 96](#).

### Urine: REFRIGERATE samples at 2-8°C

- Submit at least 2 mL of urine in a sterile, screw cap tube. Refrigerate at 2-8°C.
- Complete [Lab Form 96](#).
- Must be paired with serum.

### CSF: REFRIGERATE samples at 2-8°C

- Collect at least 2 mL of CSF in a sterile, screw cap tube. Refrigerate at 2-8°C.
- Complete [Lab Form 96](#).
- Zika IgM and JCV IgM samples must be paired with serum.

**†When testing for Zika, dengue testing should also be performed. Dengue IgM samples have to be received at OPH Lab within 48 hours of collection. Collection of serology samples on Fridays is not recommended. Outstanding samples will be rejected for Dengue IgM testing.**

Each specimen should be labeled with:

- Patient name
- Date of birth
- Medical record or Chart number
- Date and time of collection
- Specimen source

All fields marked with bold print should be completed on Lab Form 96

**Select “Arbovirus Panel” under Specimen Information. The tests performed will be determined by specimens collected and epidemiologic criteria.**

### KEEP SPECIMENS REFRIGERATED AT 2-8°C AND SHIP TOGETHER

- Place samples in an insulated container and ship with [Lab Form 96](#).
- Ship specimens with 2 frozen ice packs, top and bottom, but wrapped in a thick barrier (i.e., bubble wrap or thick pads) to avoid direct contact.
- Ship to Attn: Virology Office of Public Health Laboratory  
1209 Leesville Ave  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
(225) 219-5263

A secure fax form should be completed to receive the results directly. Please contact ID Epi for a form.