

CDC, AAP release algorithms on testing infants for Zika virus

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in collaboration with the Academy, released algorithms Tuesday on caring for infants whose mothers may have been infected with [Zika virus](#).

“This is critical step-by-step guidance for pediatricians in the care of infants and families where there’s a question of exposure to the Zika virus,” said Fan Tait, M.D., FAAP, AAP associate executive director and director of the Department of Child Health and Wellness.

Dr. Tait, AAP staff and leadership of the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases, Disaster Preparedness Advisory Council, Committee on Fetus and Newborn, Council on Children with Disabilities, Section on Neurology and Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine collaborated with the CDC in the development and review of the algorithms.

The [interim guidelines](#) published in a *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* come as officials continue to study a possible link between Zika virus in pregnant women and [microcephaly](#) in their babies. Officials are urging pediatric health care providers to work with obstetricians to [identify women who may have been infected](#) while spending time in an affected country during their pregnancy.



Their infants should be tested for Zika if they are born with microcephaly or intracranial calcifications. They also should be tested if these conditions are not detected prenatally or at birth but their mother had a positive or inconclusive test for Zika. Pediatricians should contact their state health department to facilitate these tests.

The guidelines also recommend numerous clinical evaluations for infants with possible Zika infection or microcephaly.

The CDC has issued a [travel advisory](#) urging women who are pregnant to avoid traveling to areas in Latin America and the Caribbean where the virus is spread by mosquitoes. On Tuesday, it added the U.S. Virgin Islands and Dominican Republic to that list, bringing the total number of countries and territories to 24. If women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant do travel, they should take steps to [avoid mosquito bites](#). There are no vaccines to protect against Zika virus.

“As the implications of exposure to Zika virus become a greater threat to the health of newborns and mothers, pediatricians have an increasing role in the identification and testing of infants that have been exposed,” said AAP President Benard P. Dreyer, M.D., FAAP, who encouraged members to refer to this new algorithm.

Zika is a Flavivirus like West Nile and dengue and can be tough to diagnose. Roughly one in five people will develop symptoms that may include fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis. Some people also may experience headache, muscle pain or vomiting.

The virus likely will spread to all countries in the Americas except Chile and Canada, according to a [statement from the Pan American Health Organization](#), regional office for the Americas of the World Health Organization.

The Academy will continue to update members as new information becomes available.

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