

For Pregnant Women: A Positive Zika Virus Test

What does it mean for me?



CDC understands that pregnant women may be worried and have questions about Zika virus. A positive test result might cause concerns, but it doesn't mean your baby will have birth defects. Learn more about what you might expect for your pregnancy if you get a positive test result for Zika.



I tested positive. What happens next?

If you get a positive test result for Zika during pregnancy, it signals to your doctor or other healthcare provider to watch your pregnancy more carefully. CDC recommends steps your doctor can take to help care for you during your pregnancy. Your doctor or other healthcare provider might do more ultrasounds or other tests to check the growth and development of your fetus and to look for signs of Zika virus infection during your pregnancy.

What are ultrasounds?

Ultrasounds are a safe and routine way for doctors or other healthcare providers to see the fetus during pregnancy. An ultrasound is usually done between 18-20 weeks of pregnancy as part of normal care. Extra ultrasounds are sometimes done later in pregnancy when doctors need more information about the fetus.

Does Zika virus cause microcephaly or other problems for the fetus?

Recently, researchers concluded that Zika virus infection during pregnancy can cause microcephaly and other severe brain defects. They are working quickly to study the full range of other potential health problems that Zika virus infection during pregnancy may cause.

Does a positive Zika virus test mean my baby will have birth defects?

Studies reported that some, but not all, babies born to women with positive Zika test results during pregnancy were born with microcephaly and other problems. At this time, we don't know how often a baby will have microcephaly or other problems if a woman is infected with Zika while she is pregnant. Your doctor or other healthcare provider will watch your pregnancy more closely if you have a positive Zika virus test.

How will my doctor or other healthcare provider know if my baby has microcephaly?

Your doctor or other healthcare provider will use ultrasound screening to look for microcephaly and other birth defects during your pregnancy. Ultrasounds can show some, but not all, problems with your baby's development during pregnancy. For example, microcephaly can sometimes be seen on the 18-20 week ultrasound but is more commonly detected later in the second trimester or early in the third trimester. To look for problems after birth, your baby's doctor will perform a careful physical exam of your baby, recommend routine hearing screening, and follow up with more exams and tests as needed.