



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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John R. Kasich / Governor

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 1, 2016

TO: Healthcare Providers in Ohio

CC: Ohio Local Health Departments

FROM: Mary DiOrio, MD, MPH 
State Epidemiologist
Medical Director

SUBJECT: Consider Arboviral Testing for Patients with Viral Meningitis, Encephalitis, Rash, and Febrile Illnesses

To develop a better understanding regarding arboviral disease activity in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) would like to ensure that all cases of arboviral disease are detected. While no Ohio-acquired arboviral disease cases such as LaCrosse and West Nile viruses have yet been reported, we are entering the peak season for arbovirus transmission in Ohio. In addition, ODH has reported several travel-associated cases of arboviral diseases such as dengue and Zika viruses in residents returning from the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

For this reason, ODH would like to recommend that healthcare providers consider arboviral infections in the differential diagnosis for patients that are diagnosed with viral meningitis and encephalitis and viral rash or febrile illnesses. Arboviral infections typically occur between May 15th and November 1st, with many of the infections occurring in the latter part of the season. The arboviral testing panel that would be recommended for consideration in Ohio patients with viral meningitis or encephalitis includes LaCrosse, St. Louis encephalitis, and West Nile viruses. These arboviruses are endemic in Ohio and are subject to seasonal epidemics, as was the case with West Nile virus in 2012.

The arboviral testing panel that would be recommended for consideration in Ohio patients returning from travel to the Caribbean, Central America, and South America with a viral rash or febrile illness would include dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses. Asymptomatic pregnant women with a history of travel to areas with active Zika virus transmission during pregnancy should be tested for Zika virus to assist in determining the risk for congenital infection. In addition, for patients without a recent travel history presenting with viral rash or febrile illnesses and negative test results for other etiologies and endemic arboviruses, please consider testing for dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses to assess for the potential of local transmission of these arboviruses.

Please contact the ODH's Bureau of Infectious Diseases at 614-995-5599 if you have questions. Additional information can be found on the ODH Web at www.odh.ohio.gov/mosquitoes. Thank you for your consideration to improving arboviral disease surveillance in Ohio.