

Researchers find prolonged detection of Zika virus in vaginal secretions and whole blood

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In a new study that followed a previously healthy, nonpregnant 26-year-old woman who returned to the United States from Honduras with signs and symptoms consistent with Zika virus infection, researchers at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital found the virus in vaginal secretions up to day 14 after onset of illness as well as in the whole blood up to 81 days after onset. Their findings [appeared this week](#) in *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, a journal of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"This confirms our suspicions concerning risk of [sexual transmission](#) from females to males, with our study finding this risk of infectivity to be approximately two weeks after onset of symptoms," said Dr. Kristy Murray, associate professor of pediatrics at the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine.

Researchers also found that there was prolonged detection of the virus in the whole blood, which can help revise guidelines for diagnostic testing because it gives a much longer period of detection than what is currently recommended. Currently, virus was only detected in the serum for up to eight days, but this study found it to be positive in the whole blood for more than 81 days.

Murray is also associate vice-chair for research in the department of pediatrics and director of the Laboratory for Vector-Borne and Viral Diseases at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital.

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