

MLS Laboratory Update: Discontinuation of Arbovirus Testing for the 2024 Season

DECEMBER 16, 2024

Purpose of this Message:

To notify clinical laboratory partners that arboviral testing services at the Minnesota Department of Health-Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) will be ending for the season.

Action Item:

Inform all applicable personnel in your facility that testing for endemic arboviruses is not currently available at MDH-PHL.

Background:

With the coming of winter, surveillance for arboviral diseases in Minnesota, including Powassan virus (POW), has ended for 2024. Ticks become dormant when temperatures drop below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and generally become active after 2-3 days above 45 degrees. Mosquitoes prefer temperatures above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Two great reasons to embrace winter in Minnesota. Specimens received at MDH-PHL after 12/16/2024 will not be tested for POW.

In summary:

- Testing for Powassan virus and mosquito-borne viruses for the 2024 season will end 12/16/2024
- MDH will resume testing for Powassan virus when temperatures are consistently above 40° F (estimated to be mid-March 2025)

More information about POW can be found at: [Powassan Virus Disease \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/powassan/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/powassan/index.html)

Additional Information:

If travel associated arboviral infections are suspected—such as Zika, dengue, or chikungunya—or if you have additional questions about arboviral disease, please contact MDH Epidemiology at 651-201-5414.

For more information about arboviruses, please see our [Vectorborne Diseases \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/vectorborne/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/vectorborne/index.html).

For the most up to date submission form, please see [Forms for the Infectious Disease Laboratory \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html)

Questions:

For specimen or assay-specific questions, please contact:

Sarah Namugenyi, Ph.D., Interim Virology Unit Supervisor, at Sarah.Namugenyi@state.mn.us
(651-201-5691)

OR the MN_LabSystem inbox at health.mnlabsystem@state.mn.us

For case reporting or arbovirus information:
Vector-Borne Disease Epidemiology at 651-201-5414

Thank you for your partnership and continued arboviral disease surveillance efforts in Minnesota.

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PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO ALL APPROPRIATE PERSONNEL WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION AND HEALTH SYSTEM

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www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mls/index.html

12/16/2024

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5200.