

MLS Laboratory Update: Resumption of Arbovirus Testing for the 2026 Season

MARCH 25, 2026

Purpose of this Message:

To alert clinical laboratory partners that arbovirus testing will resume at the Minnesota Department of Health-Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL).

Action Item:

Inform all relevant personnel in your facility that Powassan, Jamestown Canyon virus EIA testing and West Nile PCR will start on April 1st for the 2026 season. The arbovirus IFA and the West Nile EIA will start on May 1st.

Background:

Seasonal testing for the tick-borne Powassan virus (POW) and the mosquito-borne Jamestown Canyon virus (JCV) by Enzyme Immunoassay (EIA) as well as West Nile virus by PCR will resume at the MDH-PHL on April 1st. Clinicians should be aware that Powassan or Jamestown Canyon viral infections may be present when evaluating a patient with encephalitis when outdoor temperatures are above 40°F.

Seasonal testing for West Nile by EIA and other mosquito-borne viruses will resume on May 1st.

More information about vector-borne diseases can be found at [Vector-borne Diseases: "Summer Bugs" \(mosquitoes, ticks, and other pests\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/vectorborne/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/vectorborne/index.html>).

Specimen Storage and Shipping Temperature Requirements

The MDH-PHL requires specimens to be collected, handled and shipped in a controlled manner to maintain specimen integrity for optimal quality to perform laboratory testing. To maintain quality and ensure accuracy of our testing, MDH-PHL has incorporated specimen temperature monitoring at receipt using calibrated infrared (IR) thermometers prior to specimen acceptance. The recorded receipt temperature will ensure specimens were received at the proper temperature for the analytical test being requested. For arbovirus testing, specimens must be received refrigerated or frozen (below 8°C) or the specimen will be rejected for testing.

Additional Information:

Specimen Requirements:

- Information regarding acceptable specimen types can be found on the [MN Dept. of Health: Infectious Disease Laboratory \(IDL\) Test Catalog \(https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/\)](https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/)
 - 1 mL of serum
 - 2 mL CSF
- Please transport specimens on cold packs (2-8°C) within 48 hours of collection. If shipping will be delayed, please freeze specimens and ship to MDH frozen. **If specimens are received above 8°C, submitters will be notified that testing will not be completed.**
 - <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/gts/spectransport.html> is a helpful resource for shipping guidance.
- Please **provide symptom onset dates** when requesting serology testing for the arboviruses in the *Date of Symptom Onset* section of the General Infectious Disease Laboratory Submission Form.
 - 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)
- If any arbovirus testing was performed on the specimen at a different lab, please include the test and the results in the comments section on the submission form.

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

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

Questions: Please contact:
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www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mls/index.html

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