

Important Update

Changes to infectious gastroenteritis faecal testing

On **May 11th 2021** we are changing from traditional faecal culture to faecal PCR testing for infectious gastroenteritis. PCR testing increases detection sensitivity and improves result turnaround time. The new test is a syndromic panel that tests for a range of enteric pathogens, including bacteria and parasites: Salmonella, Shigella, Campylobacter, E.coli O157:H7, Yersinia, Shiga toxin, Cryptosporidium, Giardia and *Entamoeba histolytica*.

Please note *C. difficile* is not included in this panel and should be requested separately.

In keeping with best clinical practice, appropriate testing will be performed based on supplied clinical details / risk factors. These MUST be clearly notated on the request form.

Acceptable Clinical Details include	Unacceptable Clinical Details (Testing will not be performed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloody diarrhoea/febrile/severely unwell • Persistent diarrhoea (>1 week) • Immunocompromised – including pregnancy • Food handler • Childcare attendance • Rural – including camping trips, farm visits, use of untreated water supply • Ingestion of uncooked seafood • Recent overseas travel / Recent immigrants • Recent antibiotic or chemotherapy treatment • Public Health requests • Age: <5 yrs or >65 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clinical particulars • No acceptable risk factors indicated • Abdominal discomfort • Diarrhoea for <1 week with no other risk factor

Formed stools will not be processed as there is little clinical value in such testing. The sample should conform to the shape of the container.

If requesting a faecal PCR and other test/s (such as *C. difficile* or faecal occult blood) a separate sample is required for each test.

If you have a specific patient that is high risk but does not meet the above criteria please clearly provide details on the form, OR contact the lab as testing may be performed after consultation with a Pathologist/Medical Microbiologist/Senior Scientist.

Please refer to Medlab Central website for patient sample collection instructions (www.medlabcentral.co.nz)

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