

FAECAL MULTIPLEX PCR TESTING

The Enteric Multiplex PCR is now available at Clinical Labs.

Australian Clinical Labs Enteric Multiplex PCR can detect 13 enteric pathogens responsible for both viral and protozoal gastroenteritis within a single assay.

Gastroenteritis is a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Although the mortality in developed countries like Australia is much lower than developing countries, the morbidity and economic consequences are still high. Of the enteric pathogens, viruses are the most common cause of gastroenteritis and account for over 60% of cases, while enteric protozoa continue to be the most commonly encountered cause of parasitic diseases, affecting millions of people each year.

What will the PCR detect?

Viruses included in the assay are: Rotavirus A and B, Adenovirus 40 and 41, Norovirus GI and GII, Astrovirus and Enterovirus.

Protozoans included are Cryptosporidium, Giardia, Dientamoeba fragilis, Entamoeba histolytica and Blastocystis hominis.

Are Faeces Microscopy, Culture and Sensitivity (MC&S) and Microscopy for Parasites (OCP) still needed?

- Faeces MC&S is still required to detect infections caused by enteric bacteria, not included in the multiplex PCR.
- Culture is necessary to perform antimicrobial susceptibility testing and monitor the emergence of resistant bacteria.
- Culture assists in identifying bacterial pathogens to the species or serovar level and prevents additional outbreaks by allowing disease reporting to public health units.
- Culture is particularly important when investigating gastrointestinal illness in immunocompromised patients or returning travellers.
- Helminth infections are not detectable by PCR testing and should be requested as "OCP".

How to order

Request **Faecal MCS + PCR** on a Clinical Labs request form.

Both tests are fully Medicare rebatable, provided only one sample is submitted in a 7-day period. If helminth infection (worms) is suspected, please add "OCP" to the request. Medicare will rebate 2 OCP collections within a 7-day period. If testing for *C. difficile* is required, please specify this on the request form.

Benefits of testing

- Improved detection of the targeted pathogens in the assay.
- Improved detection of less common pathogens not routinely requested e.g. *E. histolytica*, Enterovirus and Astrovirus.
- No need for multiple stool collections or the use of preservatives (SAF).
- Timely institution of therapy. All 5 protozoa can be treated with a range of anti-protozoal drugs.

Sample required

One stool sample.

Test frequency

Multiplex faecal PCR will be performed Monday to Friday.

Cost

Medicare Bulk Billing is available, subject to guidelines and criteria.

Contact information

If further information regarding testing is required, or you need to discuss a patient, please contact your local microbiologist:

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