



Change to Laboratory Processing of Enteric Samples

Following feedback on the [consultation document](#) issued on this topic, we have decided to trial this approach to enteric testing, commencing 5th January 2015.

Laboratory testing on a stool sample will only be performed if one of the public health or severity risk factors as detailed in the table below is documented on the request form.

Severity and Public Health Risk Factors which warrant laboratory testing of Enteric Samples

Risk Factors	Suggested First Line Tests			Notes
	Culture	Giardia/ Crypto	<i>C. difficile</i>	
Severity (S) Public Health (PH)				See below. Request specifically on form.
None	No lab testing required			
Food Handler (PH)	Y			Consider <i>E.coli</i> O157
Childcare attendance (PH)	Y	Y		Consider rotavirus
Rural (PH)	Y	Y		Consider <i>E.coli</i> O157
Raw seafood (PH)	Y			
Overseas travel (PH)	Y	Y		Full parasite screen
Age <5 (S)	Y			Consider rotavirus
Age >70 (S)	Y		Y	
Recent Hospitalisation (S)			Y	
Recent Abx or chemotherapy (S)			Y	
Bloody diarrhoea (S)	Y			Consider <i>E.coli</i> O157
Immunocompromised (S)	Y	Y		
Persistent diarrhoea (S)	Y	Y		Consider <i>B. hominis</i> or <i>D fragilis</i>

- **Persistent diarrhoea** is defined as diarrhoea of **at least one week** duration.
- The **immunocompromised** cohort includes those patients that are **pregnant**.
- The **“Rural”** risk category includes patients who have been on **camping trips, farm visits, and those with untreated water supply**.
- If overseas travel, please **state area** of travel.

Adapted from:

http://www.bpac.org.nz/resources/campaign/diarrhoea/id_poem.asp

- Note that children aged less than 5 and elderly patients over the age of 70 (as shown in the table above) are recognised as being at risk of more severe diarrhoeal illness. Therefore samples from these age cohorts will be tested automatically regardless of the clinical particulars that are provided. The same proviso applies for enteric samples from hospitalised patients. However this should not preclude the inclusion of clinical details for these patients so that test selection can be optimised.
- Along the same lines those samples that are requested by Public Health or are clearly for Public Health reasons will be tested automatically. i.e. clearance testing, patients that are part of an “outbreak” cluster.

If no risk factors are detailed on the request form, then the test request will be rejected with the comment below:

“There are no documented risk factors on the request form to suggest that laboratory testing for enteric pathogens is indicated in this patient. The sample has been stored. Please contact the laboratory within 24 hours if diagnostic testing is still required.”

After this system has been in place for 6 months, we plan to audit both the enteric pathogen numbers and pathogen yield rates to assess the difference pre and post implementation.

It is important that the laboratory users have the risk factor table shown above readily available when completing a request form for an enteric sample. To facilitate this we advise the following steps are followed by test requestors:

- Printing off the table section of this clinical update and placing on the consulting room wall.
- Adding the table/clinical update as an icon on the consulting room desktop.
- This clinical update will also be accessible under the **Clinician Information** section of the Pathlab website.

When the technology is available to us, we will also look at the possibility of adding the Risk Factor table as a “pop-up” screen when making an electronic request for an enteric test through Pathlab.

If there are any queries regarding this forthcoming change, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Michael Addidle (on behalf of the Pathlab/LSR Management Group)
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Reference: Consultation Document:

<http://www.pathlab.co.nz/PicsHotel/PathLab/Brochure/Consultation%20for%20a%20Change%20to%20Processing%20of%20Stool%20Samples%20-%20December%202014.pdf>

If you are reading this as a paper copy the document is available on www.pathlab.co.nz under the Clinicians tab.