



National Acceptance Criteria for Pertussis PCR Requests

(These criteria should apply during periods of high pertussis activity. For any local outbreaks, a testing strategy should be determined in conjunction with the local public health service.)

Hospital

People are considered to be a priority for pertussis testing if:

1. They have an illness that is clinically compatible with pertussis, **AND**
2. It is within 3 weeks of cough onset, **AND**
3. They have been admitted or about to be admitted, **OR**
4. They meet the criteria for community testing.

Community

People are considered to be higher priority for pertussis testing if:

1. They have an illness that is clinically compatible with pertussis, **AND**
2. It is within 3 weeks of cough onset, **AND**
3. **Any** one of the following applies to the person:
 - *they are less than 5 years of age*
 - *they are pregnant and in the third trimester*
 - *they have a chronic respiratory condition and/or are immunocompromised*
 - *they live, work, or routinely spend time with a child/children aged less than 12 months old, pregnant people, or other people at risk of severe outcomes*
 - *there has been a specific request from the Medical Officer of Health to test.*

Please also note / undertake the following:

- Suspected pertussis cases should still be notified to public health, even if they do not meet the above laboratory acceptance criteria for testing.
- Patients who fall outside of these criteria, but for whom laboratory confirmation is still thought to be clinically justified, should be discussed with the on-call clinical microbiologist in the first instance.
- Symptomatic contacts of laboratory confirmed cases fulfil the case definition of pertussis (via an epidemiological link) and should NOT have a test done unless requested by public health.
- Where there are local supply issues with pertussis testing due to increased demand, acceptance criteria for community patients should apply in the hospital setting also. This is at the discretion of the diagnostic laboratory concerned and should be communicated clearly to requestors.
- Appropriate clinical details relating to the above must be written on the request form so that the request is accepted by the laboratory.
- Requests that don't have the acceptance criteria documented on the laboratory form or don't meet the acceptance criteria may be rejected.

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