

PATIENT INFORMATION

Receipt of a request form by the laboratory is accepted by us with the understanding that consent has been given by the patient.

The Microbiology laboratory has the following service provisions: Bacteriology including antibiotic assays; Mycology; Parasitology; Virology, Serology and Molecular diagnostics. You may be asked to transport your sample to your local GP practice or directly to the laboratory, either at Telford or Shrewsbury (9am – 5pm, weekdays). We have transport vehicles picking up samples daily from every GP practice, usually during the morning, so samples left at your GP practice first thing in the morning should catch this transport service. It might be worth checking with your GP practice if they haven't advised you. If you are asked to drop a sample off, please bear in mind that once the sample has been collected it should reach the laboratory as soon as is practicably possible. Most, but not all samples can be refrigerated if there is a delay.

NB. Please do not telephone the laboratory for results; please contact your Ward, Clinic or GP.

Sample/Test	Sample information	Expected turnaround time
Abscesses and deep-seated wounds	Pus is sent in a sterile white topped container, or swabs placed into charcoal transport media	>90% of samples will have a final report within 3 days
Antibiotic assays	The laboratory measures Gentamicin, Vancomycin and Tobramycin in-house. Samples of blood are collected in red topped vacutainers.	>90% of samples will have a final report within 24hrs. Most results are issued on day of receipt for assays performed in house.
Blood cultures	Adults: 8 - 10mls of blood into aerobic and anaerobic bottles; Paediatrics 1-3 ml minimum in a paediatric bottle.	Positive bottles are reported as they flag on the system. Negative results are issued at 36 - 48hrs. Bottles are incubated for 5 days but a further report is only issued if positive
Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis fluids	60mls is required for testing from the CAPD bag submitted	>90% reported within 3 days

Sample/Test	Sample information	Expected turnaround time
Cerebrospinal fluids	1ml is sufficient for cell count, gram and culture	Cell counts, and gram films when performed, are reported on the day of receipt. A positive culture result will have an interim result until all work is completed. All negative results are reported after 48hrs
Eye swabs, intraocular fluids and corneal scrapes	<p>Eye swabs for bacterial culture should be taken into the black charcoal transport media. Where herpes infection is suspected red viral transport media should also be taken.</p> <p>Intraocular fluids should be sent in the syringe used for collection (needle removed)</p> <p>Corneal scrapes are inoculated directly onto plates provided by the laboratory.</p> <p>Contact lenses and fluid should be submitted if Acanthamoeba infection is suspected</p>	Gram films from corneal scrapes and intra-ocular fluids are reported on the day of receipt. A positive culture result will have an interim result for corneal scrapes and intraocular fluids until all work is completed. All negative results are reported after 48hrs
Faeces – culture	Faeces should be passed into a clean, dry disposable container. A representative portion should be transferred to an approved sterile container. (White topped universal or blue capped faeces pot). If possible ½ fill the container.	90% of samples will have a final report within 5 days.
Faeces – <i>Clostridium difficile</i> testing	<p>Faeces should be passed into a clean, dry disposable container. A representative portion should be transferred to an approved sterile container. If possible ½ fill the container.</p> <p>NB. Formed stools WILL NOT be tested for <i>C difficile</i></p>	90% of samples will have a result within 2 days. Negative GP results are only reported once the final culture report is completed.

Sample/Test	Sample information	Expected turnaround time
Genital swabs- urethral exudate, Endocervical and high vaginal swabs	We culture for <i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i> , Candida species (thrush), Beta haemolytic streptococci and Staphylococci	90% of samples will have a final report within 2 days
MRSA screens	Patients are tested on admission and pre-operatively for MRSA. Urine culture is advised for patients with chronic indwelling catheters.	90% of samples will have a final report within 2 days. Negative results and presumptive positive are reported within 24hrs
Mycology	We culture for fungi and yeasts from the following specimens: Skin scrapings, Nails and Hair from conditions like athletes' foot and ring worm.	90% of samples will have a final report within 25 days. Microscopy is reported on the day the sample is processed.
Parasitology	<p>Faeces: should be passed into a clean, dry disposable bedpan or similar container. A representative portion should be transferred to an approved sterile container.</p> <p>Sellotape slides: attach to the perianal region at night pressing firmly against the perianal folds several times. Sample between 10pm and midnight or early in the morning before defaecation. Remove and attach smoothly to a microscope slide.</p> <p>Worms / Proglottids: Transfer the suspected worm to a sterile wide capped container.</p>	90% of samples will have a final report within 5 days. Positive results will be interim released when detected.
Parasitology – non enteric pathogens	<p>Skin scrapings - ensure sample taken from the red inflamed area if scabies suspected</p> <p>Sputum - samples from the lower respiratory tract expectorated by deep coughing is required.</p>	90% of samples will have a final report within 3 days.

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	Urine - for Schistosomiasis - send the terminal 20ml of a midday sample of urine, collected between 10am and 2pm, in a sterile white-topped universal container. Mites- Transfer the suspected mite to a sterile wide capped container.	
Respiratory samples – routine culture	2mls minimum of freshly expectorated sputum or BAL collected into a sterile wide topped laboratory container for investigation of chest infections	90% of samples will have a final report within 3 days.
Skin and superficial wound swabs	Covers superficial infections e.g. cellulitis, burns, paronychia, ulcers, infected eczema etc. Pus is preferred to swabs if available.	>90% of samples will have a final report within 3 days
Sterile fluids– excluding Blood cultures and CSFs	Minimum 1ml in a sterile white topped universal. Samples include fluids from swollen joints	>90% of samples have a negative culture report within 3 days. When enrichment culture is set up a final report is issued at 5 days
<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> culture (TB) culture – respiratory samples	2mls minimum of freshly expectorated sputum or BAL collected into a sterile wide topped laboratory container. The laboratory does not process TB samples on site but refers them all to the regional laboratory at Birmingham.	Positive samples telephoned to the lab on detection and passed to the Consultant for transmission to the requesting source or Consultant. Negatives reported once culture complete at 10 weeks
<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> culture (TB) – non-respiratory samples	We also receive Bone, tissues, Bone marrow Pus and sterile fluids –, Skin fragments and Urine for Tuberculosis. The laboratory does not process TB samples on site but refers them all to the regional laboratory at Birmingham	Positive samples telephoned to the lab on detection and passed to the Consultant for transmission to the requesting source or Consultant. Negatives reported once culture complete at 10 weeks

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<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> – blood tests for Mycobacterial infection	T-Spot –6ml green topped blood tube with black rings (lithium heparin). MAC blood culture – 2 X 6ml blue topped blood tube (Tri sodium citrate).	Samples are sent away. T Spot results usually take 5 days. MAC culture will take up to 10 weeks
Tips and lines	Samples include IV, Hickman lines, cannulas etc. for bacterial culture. Urinary catheter tips and drain tips are unsuitable.	>90% of samples will have a final report within 3 days
Tissues	We culture Tissue samples arthroplasty samples and small biopsies	>90% of samples have a negative culture report within 11 days once the enrichment culture is completed. Positive results will have an interim report as soon as the preliminary identification and sensitivities are Available.
Upper respiratory tract samples– excluding whooping cough	Specimens include Ear, Nose, Throat, Mouth, Pernasal, Antral washouts for routine culture	>90% of samples will be reported within 3 days.
Investigation for whooping cough)	If symptoms for less than 3 weeks Swabs to the laboratory without delay for PCR. The laboratory issues fine wire swabs for per nasal sampling. Fluid or nasopharyngeal samples can also be taken. 10mls clotted blood sample required for serological investigation for patients who have had symptoms for over 3 weeks.	>90% of samples will be reported within 7 days
Urines – routine culture	Please use the 7mL borate primary containers and NOT universal containers as these will be	>90% of urines are reported within 3 days

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	rejected; 3-7mls of urine is plenty. Please do not overfill the pot.	
Urinary antigen testing – Legionella and Pneumococcal	Collect Urine samples into a sterile universal (both white and red topped are suitable).	Results issued on day of receipt.
Serology/Virology testing:		
Routine antenatal patient screen	Blood is usually collected at the first antenatal appointment (usually between 6 and 12 weeks). Tests performed: Hepatitis B surface antigen, Syphilis antibody, HIV antibody/antigen	90% of results issued within 3 working days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Renal dialysis patient screen	Tests performed: Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis C antibody, HIV antibody/ antigen, & Anti Hepatitis B core (new patients only)	90% of results issued within 3 working days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Needlestick source/recipient screen	Tests performed source: Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis C antibody, HIV antibody/ antigen (with consent) Tests performed recipient: Stored sample. If a healthcare worker or member of public known to have had Hepatitis B vaccine, Anti HBs will be tested.	90% of results issued within 3 working days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Fertility patient screen	Tests performed: Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis C antibody, HIV antibody/ antigen (with consent, AHBc, HTLV & CMV IgG (females also get Chlamydia serology)	90% of results issued within 3 working days. Referred samples will have an interim report.

Sample/Test	Sample information	Expected turnaround time
Rashes screen	Tests performed: ASOT, Parvovirus IgG & IgM, Rubella IgG & IgM, Measles IgG, VZV IgG, Lyme, Herpes simplex, HHV6 (rare), Meningococcal PCR, Measles PCR	90% of results issued within 10 days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Hepatitis screen	Tests performed acute: Hepatitis A IgM, Hepatitis B surface antigen, CMV IgM, EBV, Hepatitis E IgM. Tests performed chronic: Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis C	90% of results issued within 7 days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Respiratory screen	Tests performed: <i>Coxiella burnetii</i> (Q fever) serology, <i>Chlamydia pneumoniae</i> & <i>Chlamydia psittaci</i> (PCR only), <i>Mycoplasma pneumoniae</i> PCR. Respiratory viruses Inc. Influenza A & B, RSV, SARS-CoV-2, Parainfluenza, Rhinovirus & Adenovirus, <i>Bordetella pertussis</i> .	90% of results issued within 10 days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Infections in pregnancy screen	Tests performed: Parvovirus IgG/IgM, Toxoplasma, CMV, HSV, Enterovirus, VZV, Rubella, HIV	Toxoplasma, CMV, VZV, Rubella and HIV serology; 90% of results issued within 3 working days. Parvovirus IgG/IgM, HSV and Enterovirus; 90% of results issued within 10 days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Lymphadenopathy screen	Tests performed: Toxoplasma, EBV, HIV, CMV IgM, ASO, (Mumps – referred test)	90% of results issued within 4 working days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
PUO (Pyrexia of Unknown Origin) / Endocarditis screen	Tests performed: Toxoplasma, Atypical screen (PCR for <i>C. pneumoniae</i> , <i>C. psittaci</i> and <i>Mycoplasma pneumoniae</i> , serology for <i>C. burnettii</i> Q Fever), HIV (PUO)	Toxoplasma and HIV serology; 90% of results issued within 3 working days. Referred samples will have an interim report.

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IDU (Intravenous Drug User) screen	Tests performed: Hepatitis C, HIV, Hepatitis B surface Antigen (HBsAg), Hepatitis A IgG, Anti Hepatitis B surface antibody (AHBs), Syphilis	90% of results issued within 3 working days. Referred samples will have an interim report
Sexually transmitted infections (Serology/ Virology)	Tests performed: Syphilis antibody, HIV antibody/antigen, Herpes simplex	HIV and syphilis; 90% of results issued within 3 working days. HSV PCR – 90% of results issued within 10 days (referred samples have an interim report).
Encephalitis / Meningitis screen	Tests performed: <i>Herpes simplex virus</i> (HSV), Enterovirus, Parechovirus, <i>Varicella zoster</i> , Meningococcal/Pneumococcal.	Reference laboratory tests can take up to 7-10 days although positive results are usually telephoned immediately (i.e. within 1-2 days).
Molecular testing (PCRs)		
Conjunctivitis & eye swab screen	Tests performed: HSV, <i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i> and <i>Neisseria gonorrhoea</i>	HSV PCR – 90% of results issued within 10 days (referred samples have an interim report). Chlamydia/Gonorrhoea – 90% of results issued within 3 working days
Chlamydia & <i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i> screen	Cervical or vulvo-vaginal swab in COBAS PCR Female swab kit. Urine in Cobas PCR urine Sample kit	90% of results issued within 3 working days.
COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)	SARS-CoV-2 Real time PCR; Nose/throat swabs in VTM (Virus Transport Medium)	90% of results issued within 1 day of receipt. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Norovirus Testing	Tests performed: Norovirus I and II PCR testing; Faeces samples	90% of results issued within 2 days. Referred samples will have an interim report.
Viral Respiratory Testing	Tests performed: Respiratory viruses Inc. Influenza A & B, RSV, Parainfluenza, Rhinovirus & Adenovirus	90% of results issued within 1 day of receipt. Referred samples will have an interim report.

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CSFs for Viral meningitis	Tests performed: <i>Herpes simplex</i> 1&2, <i>Varicella zoster</i> , Enterovirus and Parechovirus	90% of results issued within 2 working days.
Hepatitis C viral load testing (HCV)	HCV is a quantitative nucleic acid test for use as an aid to the management of HCV infected patients undergoing anti-viral therapy	90% of results issued within 10 working days.