



## ***Helicobacter pylori* Testing: Current Recommendations**

The purpose of this clinical update is to remind laboratory requestors of our current approach to the diagnosis of *H. pylori* infection

### **The method of choice to diagnose *H. pylori* infection is faecal antigen testing**

This monoclonal antibody-based technique detects the presence of *H. pylori* antigens in a faecal sample. It has high sensitivity and specificity for diagnosis of active infection and to confirm eradication following treatment.

### **Appropriate Clinical details are a pre-requisite for testing**

- Please refer to the Pathlab clinical update from December 2016 and BPAC guidelines for further details on *H. pylori* testing criteria and red flags for endoscopy referral.

### **Please note the following in order to minimise false negative results with faecal antigen testing**

- Faeces need to be tested **within 24 hours** of collection. Therefore specimens need to be submitted well within this time-frame with the **collection time clearly documented**.
- **Antibiotics** should not be taken in the **4 weeks** prior to testing. **Proton pump inhibitors (PPI) and bismuth** should be avoided for **2 weeks** prior to testing.

### ***H. pylori* serology will only be performed for the following reasons:**

- The clinical details on the form specifically state that the patient is **unable to discontinue their PPI** for 2 weeks.
- Documentation that the patient has been discussed with and approved for *H. pylori* serology by a Clinical Microbiologist or Gastroenterologist.

Please contact us if you have any questions with regards to the above.

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