



NEW TEST ALERT

MRSA/SA SSTI BY PCR

Effective 2-26-09, Northern Plains Laboratory (NPL) is pleased to announce the addition of the Cepheid Xpert MRSA/SA Skin and Soft Tissues Infection Assay (MRSA/SA SSTI Assay) to our in house test menu. The MRSA/SA SSTI assay is an automated DNA test for simultaneously detecting methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and methicillin-sensitive *Staphylococcus aureus* (MSSA) directly from swabs collected from skin and soft tissue infections. This assay utilizes real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) methodology, which allows for rapid results with an assay time of one hour.

The most common cause of skin and soft tissue infections is *Staph aureus* with MRSA representing over 50% of these infections in parts of the U.S. The tremendous increase of both hospital acquired and community acquired MRSA in skin and soft tissue infections requires a change in management of these infections. Current laboratory methods can take 48-72 hours to determine if a SSTI is caused by MSSA or MRSA. Rapidly identifying the causative pathogen allows for targeted antimicrobial therapy and allows for immediate isolation and infection control measures. The MRSA/SA SSTI assay will be performed 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Possible MRSA/SA SSTI assay results are listed below:

1. MRSA POSITIVE/SA POSITIVE: Positive for MRSA by PCR
2. MRSA negative/MSSA negative: Negative for MRSA and MSSA by PCR
3. MRSA negative/MSSA POSITIVE: Positive for MSSA (not MRSA) by PCR

Reflex aerobic bacterial culture will be performed regardless of assay results. The option of ordering this test without the reflex is available by specifying "No Reflex" when requesting.

Specimen:

Swab specimens of skin and soft tissue infections collected with a Copan double swab (red cap). (Please contact NPL at ext. 5708 for collection swabs.) The Copan double swab is the **only** acceptable collection device for this test. Following collection, sample is stable for 24 hours at room temperature or up to 5 days when stored at 2-8°C.

Special Considerations or Limitations:

The MRSA/SA SSTI Assay is not intended to monitor treatment for MRSA/SA infections or to be used for surveillance cultures.

For questions, please contact NPL at 701-530-5700 or 1-800-645-1003.

Test Code	CPT Codes	Test Name	Specimen Requirements	Reference Range
SSTIP	87640 87641	MRSA/SA SSTI by PCR	Swab of infection	MRSA: Negative MSSA: Negative