



NEW TEST ALERT

April 30, 2009

Testing for Intestinal Parasites by Immunoassay

Northern Plains Laboratory (NPL) will modify its protocol for performing stool Ova and Parasite (O&P) testing effective May 4, 2009. Initial parasite testing will be performed by a sensitive and rapid immunoassay antigen method detecting both *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium species*. We will consider the *Giardia/Cryptosporidium* immunoassay to be the standard order when ova and parasite testing is requested.

Please request test code “**OVP**” for the first line of ova and parasite testing. If the *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* immunoassays are negative, a microscopic exam can be performed if subsequently requested by the provider. Samples are retained for seven days. Note: Test code “OVA” has been discontinued.

Analysis of our internal data demonstrates that we have a very low positive rate for traditional O&P exams with more than 97% of exams reported as negative. *Giardia lamblia* constitutes the majority of positive findings. Literature indicates that *Giardia* incidence is approximately 2-5% and *Cryptosporidium* incidence is about 1-3% in North America. Furthermore, *Cryptosporidium species* is not detected by the traditional O&P microscopic exam, therefore, immunoassay antigen testing is recommended. Immunoassay has demonstrated to be a more sensitive and effective method in detecting both parasites compared to microscopy. Note: *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* immunoassays may also be requested individually by requesting test codes “GAT” and “CRYPT” respectively.

The traditional ova and parasite microscopic exam (Test code: “OVTVL”) is recommended only if one of the following conditions is present:

- Recent travel outside the US
- Residence in or recent immigration from a developing country
- AIDS / Immunosuppression

Specimen Collection:

Acceptable specimen: Preserve in 10% formalin and modified PVA within 30 minutes of collection. Mix 1 part stool with 3 parts of the fixative. MIX WELL.

For questions and/or additional testing information, please contact NPL at 701-530-5700 or 1-800-645-1003.

Test Code	CPT Code	Test Name	Specimen Requirements	Reference Range
OVP	87328 & 87329	Ova & Parasites by Immunoassay	Stool specimen in 10% formalin & PVA	Negative
OVTVL	87177 & 87209	Ova & Parasite Exam (Travel History)	Stool specimen in 10% formalin & PVA	Negative