

## Changes to *Helicobacter pylori* stool antigen testing; Interim treatment advice

Provincial Laboratory Services | Microbiology Division

[www.healthpei.ca/src/microbiology](http://www.healthpei.ca/src/microbiology)

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This information applies to: *Island Physicians and Nurse Practitioners*

Effective July 24, 2017, the Microbiology Laboratory is now using a new *Helicobacter pylori* stool antigen testing kit, the "HpSA plus" and this will be noted on future reports.

There is no change to sample collection: stool in a plain (no preservative) container is required for testing. If considering test of cure: while off antibiotics, please discontinue Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) or other acid suppressants for at least 2 weeks prior to testing this is an increase from one week previously.

**NEW:** If a patient tests negative and has been on antibiotics, PPIs, or Bismuth in the prior two weeks before specimen collection, we recommend recollecting the specimen after the patient is off these agents.

Over the past 3 months, Dr. Greg German and Dr. Jeremy Beck have conducted a quality study comparing stool antigen testing versus a combined gold standard endoscopic biopsy with immunohistochemical staining, culture, and rapid urease testing in 12 patients. The new stool antigen test kit (HpSA plus) performed very well and happens to be more cost effective.

The previous test kit appeared to have an increase in false positives that is suggested to have occurred since a reformulation on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. **How this may affect your previously positive patients:** There were 840 patients that tested positive since the reformulation date. Those who are still positive and/or clinically failed antibiotic therapy should likely be retested. This is to ensure that *H. pylori* is contributing to their current symptoms and/or need for chronic acid suppression.

If you would like a list of your patients who have tested positive since the 2016-12-01 reformulated *H. pylori* stool antigen testing, please contact Vanessa Arseneau at 902-894-2310 fax: 902-894-2120.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the change in *H. pylori* testing, please contact Dr. Greg German at 902-894-2515 fax: 902-620-0483. Fax requests can be sent to 902-894-2120.

From an antibiotic management standpoint, Dr. German and Dr. Beck are also attempting to determine the clarithromycin resistance rate for *H. pylori* on PEI, which is necessary to provide guidance on first line therapy using new Canadian, American and International guidelines. Until that data is collected, the following is recommended when selecting a *H. pylori* treatment regimen:

1. If previous macrolide exposure within the last 6 months, select an initial *H. pylori* regimen without clarithromycin or another macrolide.
2. Seven days of therapy for *H. pylori* is no longer recommended. It is now generally recommended to treat *H. pylori* for 14 days.

There have been some recent changes to the PEI Pharmacare Formulary to extend the Special Authorization benefit of PPIs for *H. pylori* from 7 days to 14 days ([link to July 17 Pharmacare Bulletin](#)).

cc: PEI Pharmacists  
Dr. Jeremy Beck

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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