

Guidelines for referral of Herpes simplex virus serology (HSV 1&2)

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Valued Clients,

The Serology/Virology Department at Canterbury Health Laboratories would like to remind referrers of the limited utility of Herpes simplex serology and confirm our endorsement of the guidelines from the New Zealand Microbiology network and BPAC NZ.

- Molecular testing for HSV has now superseded serological testing for the vast majority of clinical indications. The sub-optimal sensitivity and specificity of HSV serology can be misleading and lead to sub-optimal clinical management, particularly when used in relation to sexually transmitted infection.
- Herpes simplex virus (HSV) PCR is a better approach in almost all situations
- Type specific HSV serology is rarely useful. There is little value in performing serogroup specific HSV serology for most clinical situations. It takes several weeks for an antibody response to occur following the primary exposure to HSV.
- Requests for HSV specific serology are considered acceptable for:
 1. **Pre-transplant screening.**
 2. **Investigation of clinical herpes in Pregnancy.**
- Should an HSV specific serology request be considered necessary outside of the pre-transplant / perinatal setting this can be discussed by contacting one of our Clinical Microbiologists, prior to referral.

For any enquiries please contact:

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