

Memo

To:	Referral Laboratories – Haematology/Send away	From:	Flow Cytometry- Waikato Hospital
Date:	23rd July 2026		
Subject:	EMA Binding Requests		

Kia ora,

The Waikato Hospital Flow Cytometry Laboratory would like to bring to your attention a recurring issue that we have identified regarding requests for the **EMA Binding Assay**.

Over recent months, we have observed a number of requests for the **EMA Binding Assay** where the accompanying clinical details indicate investigation for **coeliac disease** (e.g. coeliac screen, iron deficiency, chronic diarrhoea, weight loss, positive tTG antibodies). In these cases, it appears that the intended investigation was the **endomysial antibody (EMA) serology test**, rather than the **Eosin-5-maleimide (EMA) Binding Assay** performed by flow cytometry.

To avoid confusion, please note the following:

Test	Purpose	Performed by
EMA Binding Assay (Eosin-5-maleimide)	Investigation of hereditary spherocytosis and selected red cell membrane disorders	Flow Cytometry Laboratory
Endomysial Antibody (EMA)	Serological test used in the investigation of coeliac disease	Immunology/Serology Laboratory

Unfortunately, these two tests share the same abbreviation (**EMA**), which has resulted in occasional incorrect requests.

Where the clinical information indicates investigation for coeliac disease and an EMA Binding Assay has been requested, the request cannot be processed as ordered and will be declined. A new request for the appropriate coeliac serology (endomysial antibody and/or tissue transglutaminase IgA, as appropriate) will be required.

To help minimise delays in patient care, we kindly ask that requesting clinicians and laboratory staff verify that the correct EMA test is selected when ordering investigations.

If hereditary spherocytosis is the suspected diagnosis, please continue to request the **EMA Binding Assay (Flow Cytometry)** and collect internal control samples as required.

If the clinical question relates to coeliac disease, please verify this request/information with the requestor according to your local testing protocol.

We appreciate your assistance in helping reduce incorrect test requests and ensuring patients receive the appropriate investigations without unnecessary delays and recollects.

If you have any questions regarding the EMA Binding Assay or referral criteria, please do not hesitate to contact the Waikato Hospital Flow Cytometry Laboratory.

Kind regards

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Te Manawa Taki

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