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Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Referrer Update: Clinical Criteria for *Helicobacter pylori* Antigen Testing October 2026

A recent review has indicated that many requests for stool antigen testing for *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) are being requested in conjunction with testing for acute gastroenteritis. The clinical presentation of *H. pylori* infection is very different from that of infective gastroenteritis. Many requests for *H. pylori* testing have no clinical details to support testing for this pathogen and **therefore, effective 16 November 2026, the following criteria will be applied**:

1. **Stool samples will only be processed for *H. pylori* testing when appropriate clinical details are provided.**

   Examples of acceptable clinical details may include any of the following:

   - Dyspeptic symptoms
     - Heartburn
     - Abdominal discomfort
     - Nausea/vomiting
     - Anorexia
     - Excessive belching/burping
   - "Gastritis"
   - Unintentional weight loss
   - History of peptic ulcers
   - Suspected, confirmed or family history of gastric carcinoma
   - Family history of *H. pylori* infection
   - Endoscopic evidence of ulceration
   - Monitoring of treatment of *H. pylori* infection

2. **Stool samples for *H. pylori* testing will not be accepted if an enteric pathogen PCR panel or viral pathogen PCR panel has also been requested for investigation of infective gastroenteritis.**

3. **Faecal antigen testing for *H. pylori* in persons under 16 years will be restricted to those requests where specialist approval has been gained from a Paediatrician or Gastroenterologist.** Screening children with non-invasive markers of *H. pylori*, including stool antigen test, is NOT recommended, other than to document successful eradication.

For more information regarding when patients should undergo testing for *H. pylori* infection, please refer to this BPAC article: *H. pylori*: who to test and how to treat - bpacnz

Please contact a Microbiologist if you have any questions.

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