



TECHNICAL BULLETIN



Testing for H. pylori

Background

The American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) released new guidelines for managing dyspepsia in November 2005. Below is a summary of the guidelines highlighting important changes relative to H. pylori disease and diagnosis.¹

- AGA now recommends that serology testing **no longer be performed to test for H. pylori** because it only tests for the antibody and does not test for active H. pylori infection.
- The AGA guidelines recommend using a Stool Antigen test (HpSA®) or the Urea Breath Test (UBT) to test for active H. pylori infection.
- AGA now recommends that all patients presenting with Dyspepsia, who do not have alarm symptoms, have not been using NSAIDS, and who are not > 55, should be tested for H. pylori prior to being prescribed PPIs.

The American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) also recommends testing to prove eradication after therapy in the following circumstances:⁷

Any patient with an H. pylori associated ulcer, individuals with persistent dyspeptic symptoms despite the test and treat strategy, those with H. pylori associated MALT lymphoma, and individuals who have undergone resection of early gastric cancer. When confirmation of eradication is necessary, testing should generally be performed no sooner than 4 weeks after completion of treatment.

HpSA® Order Information

Test (Order) Code: **34838** CPT Code*: **87338**

Testing Frequency: Monday through Friday

Specimen Requirements

Unpreserved stool specimen in sterile cup

*The CPT codes provided are based on AMA guidelines and are for informational purposes only. CPT coding is the sole responsibility of the billing party. Please direct any questions regarding coding to the payor being billed.

Comparison of H. pylori Tests

	HpSA® Stool Antigen Test	Urea Breath Test	Serology Test
AGA Recommended for H. pylori testing ²	✓	✓	
No Fasting required	✓	Fast 1 hour prior to test ³	✓
No need to stop medication (PPIs, bismuth preparations, or antimicrobials) prior to test	✓	No medications allowed for 2 weeks prior to test ⁴	✓
Tests for active infection	✓	✓	
High Sensitivity, High Specificity	✓	✓	
Simple collection process	✓	Requires fasting, drinking phenylalanine preparation, and slight wait to recollect ⁵	✓

- HpSA® is a highly accurate test with sensitivity of 96.1% and specificity of 95.7%.⁶
- Specimen collection is simple and can be performed in the privacy of the patient's home.

For more information contact:

Ike Northern - Microbiology, CompuNet Clinical Laboratories (937) 297-8334 or william.i.northern@questdiagnostics.com

www.compunetlab.com

^{1,2} American Gastroenterological Association Technical Review on the Evaluation of Dyspepsia 2005;129:1756-1780.

^{3,4,5} "In testing for H. pylori...The Evidence Is In", Meretek informational brochure 0507P-0034, September 2007.

⁶ "Announcing New Guidelines from the AGA" information sheet, Meridian Bioscience, Inc., 2006.

⁷ American College of Gastroenterology Guideline on the Management of Helicobacter pylori Infection, American Journal of Gastroenterology 2007; 1816.