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Last updated: 19 January 2006, L. Dini	

TAT= turn around time, which is from the time the sample reaches the laboratory until the time that positive results are telephoned or faxed to the sender.

Blood specimens		
Test name	Type of Blood Sample	Special instructions
Malaria species identification, TAT = 1 day	Unclogged, EDTA blood	Clotted blood is unsuitable
Parasite count/parasitaemia, TAT = 1 day	Unclogged, EDTA blood	Clotted blood is unsuitable
Antigen test for Plasmodium falciparum, TAT = ½ day	Unclogged, EDTA blood	Clotted blood is unsuitable
Antibody test for malaria	Not performed in parasitology	
Microfilaria or Filaria or Wuchereria bancrofti or elephantiasis or Loa loa, TAT = 1 day	Unclogged, EDTA blood	Blood sampling should be performed at the correct times depending on the suspected filarial species.
Antigen test for <i>Wuchereria bancrofti</i> (lymphatic filariasis or elephantiasis), TAT = ½ day	Unclogged, EDTA blood	Clotted blood is unsuitable
Sleeping sickness or Trypanosomes, TAT = 1 day	Unclogged, EDTA blood, Fresh CSF	Clotted blood is unsuitable
Relapsing fever (<i>Borrelia duttoni</i> or <i>B. recurrentis</i>), TAT = 1 day	Unclogged, EDTA blood	Clotted blood is unsuitable
<i>Babesia</i> , TAT = 1 day	Unclogged, EDTA blood	Clotted blood is unsuitable

Stool specimens	
Test name	Special instructions
Identification of all human nematodes including: <i>Ascaris lumbricoides</i> (common roundworm) Hookworms (<i>Ancylostoma duodenale</i> / <i>Necator americanis</i>)	None TAT = 1 day

<i>Trichuris trichiura</i> (whipworm) <i>Strongyloides stercoralis</i>	Specimens, that may take longer than a day to reach the laboratory, should ideally be preserved in an equal quantity of 10% formalin
Identification of all human cestodes including: Tapeworm (<i>Taenia saginata/solium</i>)	TAT = 2 days
Identification of all human trematodes including: Bilharzia (<i>Schistosoma mansoni/haematobium</i>)	TAT = 1 day
Identification of all human protozoa including: <i>Isospora belli/ hominis</i> <i>Cryptosporidium parvum</i> <i>Cyclospora cayetanensis</i> <i>Giardia lamblia</i> <i>Blastocystis hominis</i>	TAT = 1 day
<i>Microsporidia</i> species identification	TAT = 3 days
<i>Amoebae</i> (including <i>Entamoeba histolytica</i>)	Specimen must reach laboratory within 30 minutes of sampling. Don't add preservative. TAT = 1 day for microscopy

Other types of specimens		
Type of specimen	Test	Special instructions
Induced sputum or bronchial washings or BAL (bronchoalveolar lavage) TAT = 1 day	IFA for PCP (<i>Pneumocystis jiroveci</i> , previously known as <i>carinii</i>)	Sputum is not an optimal specimen. BAL is preferable.
Sputum TAT = 1 day	Larvae of <i>Strongyloides stercoralis</i>	Larvae may be infective: handle with care
Urine TAT = 1 day	Bilharzia (<i>Schistosoma haematobium</i>); <i>Trichomonas vaginalis</i>	At least 5 ml urine is required
Sticky tape swab TAT = 1 day	Pinworm (<i>Enterobius vermicularis</i>)	Early morning sticky tape swab is the optimal specimen. Eggs may be infective: handle with care
Liver abscess fluid or cyst fluid TAT = 1 day	Amoebic liver abscess (<i>Entamoeba histolytica</i>)	Specimen must reach laboratory within 30 minutes of sampling
Cyst fluid/ sputum TAT = 1 day	Hydatid hooklets and scolices of <i>Echinococcus</i> species	None
Worm or proglottid (egg packet) TAT = 1 day for worm ID, 2 days for proglottids	Worm and tapeworm identification	Submit proglottids in saline
Bone marrow or liver biopsy or skin biopsy/ impression smears TAT = 2 days	<i>Leishmania</i> species	Submit skin biopsy in saline
Corneal scrapings or biopsy or contact lenses & solutions TAT = 1 month	<i>Acanthamoeba keratitis</i>	Contact Parasitology Unit before taking samples to make arrangements for sampling & culture

The Parasitology Reference Unit is closed on weekends and public holidays.