



MEMO

TO: Regional Medical Laboratory (RML) Clients

FROM: Linda Strycker, MT(ASCP), Microbiology Manager
Gerald C. Miller, PhD, Chief of Microbiology and Immunology

DATE: December 19, 2008

SUBJECT: Improved Parasite Screening Test

Recent literature indicates the most common parasites in the United States are *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium* sp. Regional Medical Laboratory's internal study also supports this data. *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* account for over 90% of the parasites reported at RML in the past five years. *Giardia lamblia* is the most common, and *Cryptosporidium* is the second most common of the intestinal parasites. However, **Cryptosporidium may not be detected by the traditional O&P test.** Therefore, antigen testing is now recommended for these organisms since it is more sensitive and effective in detecting and identifying both parasites.

Based on the above information, RML has improved its parasite testing by offering an **immunoassay antigen test** which screens for **both *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium* sp.** The order name is **C PARA SC**. When a **C PARA SC** is ordered and performed, specimens with **negative screen** results will be held for one week for convenience of the physician if further testing is desired. The **test results** will report either **positive or negative for each organism.** For example, a report may indicate the following "POSITIVE FOR CRYPTOSPORIDIUM SP, NEGATIVE FOR GIARDIA LAMBLIA", or "NEGATIVE FOR CRYPTOSPORIDIUM SP, POSITIVE FOR GIARDIA LAMBLIA, or "NEGATIVE FOR CRYPTOSPORIDIUM SP, NEGATIVE FOR GIARDIA LAMBLIA."

The comprehensive ova and parasite test (C PARASITE) will still be available but is recommended only if one of the following conditions is present.

- Previous *Giardia*/*Cryptosporidium* screen is negative but persistent diarrhea symptoms continue.
- Recent travel outside the U.S.
- Immunocompromised patient
- New immigrant
- Transplant patient

The previous orderable tests for *Cryptosporidium* (C CRYPTOSP) and *Giardia lamblia* (GIARD FEC) by DFA are no longer available. If these tests are ordered, the C PARA SC test will be performed. The CPT codes for the updated C PARA SC are 87328 and 87329.

The specimen to be submitted to the laboratory is stool placed in PVA and Formalin vials (Parapak) ASAP after passage. The tests will be performed Monday through Friday.

Please contact Linda Strycker, MT(ASCP), Microbiology Section Manager at 918-744-3131, ext 15575 or Gerald C. Miller, PhD, at 918-744-2553 or 800-722-8077 with any questions or concerns regarding parasite testing.