



Test Definition: SLFA

Cryptococcus Antigen Screen with Titer, Serum

Overview

Useful For

Aiding in the diagnosis of cryptococcosis

This test **should not be used** as a test of cure or to guide treatment decisions.

This test **should not be used** as a screening procedure for the general populations.

Reflex Tests

| Test Id | Reporting Name | Available Separately | Always Performed |
|---------|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| SLFAT | Cryptococcus Ag Titer, LFA, S | Yes | No |

Testing Algorithm

If result is positive, *Cryptococcus* titer will be performed at an additional charge.

Method Name

Lateral Flow Assay (LFA)

NY State Available

No

Specimen

Specimen Type

Serum

Specimen Required

Supplies: Sarstedt Aliquot Tube, 5 mL (T914)

Collection Container/Tube:

Preferred: Serum gel

Acceptable: Red top

Submission Container/Tube: Plastic vial

Specimen Volume: 1 mL

Collection Instructions: Centrifuge and aliquot serum into a plastic vial.

Forms

If not ordering electronically, complete, print, and send [Infectious Disease Serology Test Request](#) (T916) with the specimen.

Specimen Minimum Volume

0.5 mL

Reject Due To

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Gross hemolysis | Reject |
| Gross lipemia | Reject |

Specimen Stability Information

| Specimen Type | Temperature | Time | Special Container |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| Serum | Refrigerated (preferred) | 14 days | |
| | Frozen | 14 days | |

Clinical & Interpretive**Clinical Information**

Cryptococcosis is an invasive fungal infection caused by *Cryptococcus neoformans* or *Cryptococcus gattii*. *C neoformans* has been isolated from several sites in nature, particularly weathered pigeon droppings. *C gattii* was previously only associated with tropical and subtropical regions. More recently, however, this organism has been found to be endemic in British Columbia and the Pacific Northwestern US and is associated with several different tree species.

Infection is usually acquired via the pulmonary route. Patients are often unaware of any exposure history. Approximately half of the patients with symptomatic disease have a predisposing immunosuppressive condition such as AIDS, steroid therapy, lymphoma, or sarcoidosis. Symptoms may include fever, headache, dizziness, ataxia, somnolence, and cough. While the majority of *C neoformans* infections occur in immunocompromised patient populations, *C gattii* has a higher predilection for infection of healthy individuals.(1,2)

In addition to the lungs, cryptococcal infections frequently involve the central nervous system (CNS), particularly in patients infected with HIV. Mortality among patients with CNS cryptococcosis may approach 25% despite antibiotic therapy. Untreated CNS cryptococcosis is invariably fatal. Disseminated disease may affect any organ system and usually occurs in immunosuppressed individuals.

Reference Values

Negative

Interpretation

The presence of cryptococcal antigen in any body fluid (serum or cerebrospinal fluid) is indicative of cryptococcosis. Specimens that are positive by the lateral flow assay screen are automatically repeated with the same method utilizing dilutions to generate a titer value.

Disseminated infection is usually accompanied by a positive serum test.

Higher *Cryptococcus* antigen titers appear to correlate with more severe infections. Declining titers may indicate regression of infection. However, monitoring titers to cryptococcal antigen should not be used as a test of cure or to guide treatment decisions. Low-level titers may persist for extended periods of time following appropriate therapy and the resolution of infection.(3)

Cautions

A negative result does not preclude diagnosis of cryptococcosis, particularly if only a single specimen has been tested and the patient shows symptoms consistent with cryptococcosis.

A positive result is indicative of cryptococcosis; however, all test results should be reviewed considering other clinical findings

Testing should not be performed as a screening procedure for the general populations and should only be performed when clinical evidence suggests the diagnosis of cryptococcal disease.

Testing hemolyzed serum specimens may lead to false-negative results due to the high background color on the lateral flow assay strip.

Although rare, extremely high concentrations of cryptococcal antigen can result in weak test lines and in extreme instances, yield negative test results.

This assay has not been evaluated for cross-reactivity in patients with trichosporonosis.

Supportive Data

634 serum specimens (632 prospective and 2 archived) were tested in a blinded fashion by the IMMY *Cryptococcus* Antigen Lateral Flow Assay (LFA; Norman, OK), the Meridian Latex Agglutination (Meridian Bioscience Inc., Cincinnati, OH) assay and the Meridian *Cryptococcus* Antigen EIA within a 24 hour period. Specimens with discordant results after initial testing were repeated by both assays during the same freeze/thaw cycle. The results are summarized below:

| Table 1. Comparison of the IMMY LFA to the Meridian Latex Agglutination Assay | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------|----------|-----|
| IMMY LFA | Meridian Latex Agglutination | | | |
| | | Positive | Negative | |
| Positive | 9 | 1* | | 10 |
| Negative | 0 | 624 | | 624 |
| | 9 | 625 | | 634 |

*This sample showed 1+ reactivity by the Meridian latex agglutination assay upon screening, but was interpreted as negative according to the package insert requirement for 2+ reactivity.

Sensitivity: 100% (9/9); 95% Confidence Interval (CI): 65.5% to 100%

Specificity: 99.8% (624/625); 95% CI: 99.0% to 99.9%

Overall Percent Agreement: 99.8% (633/634); 95% CI: 99.0% to 99.9%

| |
|---|
| Table 2. Comparison of the IMMY LFA to the Meridian <i>Cryptococcus</i> Antigen EIA |
|---|

| IMMY LFA | Meridian EIA | | | |
|----------|--------------|----------|----------|-----|
| | | Positive | Negative | |
| | Positive | 5 | 5* | 9 |
| | Negative | 0 | 624 | 624 |
| | | 5 | 629 | 634 |

*These 5 samples were positive by the Meridian Latex Agglutination assay

Sensitivity: 100% (5/5); CI: 51.7% to 100%

Specificity: 99.2% (624/629); CI: 98.1% to 99.7%

Overall Percent Agreement: 99.2% (629/634); CI: 98.1% to 99.7%

Clinical Reference

- Speed B, Dunt D: Clinical and host differences between infections with the two varieties of *Cryptococcus neoformans*. Clin Infect Dis. 1995;21(1):28-34
- Chen S, Sorrell T, Nimmo G, et al: Epidemiology and host- and variety-dependent characteristics of infection due to *Cryptococcus neoformans* in Australia and New Zealand. Australasian Cryptococcal Study Group. Clin Infect Dis. 2000;31(2):499-505. doi:10.1086/313992
- Perfect JR, Dismukes WE, Dromer F, et al: Clinical practice guidelines for the management of cryptococcal disease: 2010 update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America. Clin Infect Dis. 2010;50(3):291-322
- Perfect JR: Cryptococcosis (*Cryptococcus neoformans* and *Cryptococcus gattii*). In: Bennett JE, Dolin R, Blaser MJ, eds. Mandell, Douglas, and Bennett's Principles and Practice of Infectious Diseases. 9th ed. Elsevier; 2020:3146-3161
- Chang CC, Harrison TS, Bicanic TA, et al. Global guideline for the diagnosis and management of cryptococcosis: an initiative of the ECMM and ISHAM in cooperation with the ASM [published correction appears in Lancet Infect Dis. 2024 Aug;24(8):e485. doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(24)00426-2]. Lancet Infect Dis. 2024;24(8):e495-e512. doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(23)00731-4
- Perfect JR, Bicanic T. Cryptococcosis diagnosis and treatment: What do we know now. Fungal Genet Biol. 2015;78:49-54. doi:10.1016/j.fgb.2014.10.003

Performance

Method Description

The *Cryptococcus* antigen (CrAg) lateral flow assay is a sandwich immunochromatographic assay. Specimens and diluent are added to a test tube and the lateral flow device is added. The test uses specimen wicking to capture gold-conjugated, anti-CrAg monoclonal antibodies and gold-conjugated control antibodies deposited on the test membrane. If CrAg is present in the specimen, it binds to the gold-conjugated, anti-CrAg antibodies. This complex wicks up the membrane and interacts with the test line, which has immobilized anti-CrAg monoclonal antibodies. The antigen-antibody complex forms a sandwich at the test line causing a visible line to form. A valid test shows a visible line at the control line. Positive test results create 2 lines (control and specimen) while negative results form only the control line. (Package insert: CrAg Lateral Flow Assay, IMMY, Norman, OK)

PDF Report

No

Day(s) Performed

Monday through Sunday

Report Available

Same day/1 to 2 days

Specimen Retention Time

14 days

Performing Laboratory Location

Mayo Clinic Jacksonville Clinical Lab

Fees & Codes**Fees**

- Authorized users can sign in to [Test Prices](#) for detailed fee information.
- Clients without access to Test Prices can contact [Customer Service](#) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Prospective clients should contact their account representative. For assistance, contact [Customer Service](#).

Test Classification

This test has been cleared, approved, or is exempt by the US Food and Drug Administration and is used per manufacturer's instructions. Performance characteristics were verified by Mayo Clinic in a manner consistent with CLIA requirements.

CPT Code Information

87899

LOINC® Information

| Test ID | Test Order Name | Order LOINC® Value |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| SLFA | Cryptococcus Ag Screen w/Titer, S | 29903-2 |

| Result ID | Test Result Name | Result LOINC® Value |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 62075 | Cryptococcus Ag Screen w/Titer, S | 29903-2 |