

Update to Tick-Borne Illness Testing Guidelines

With tick season upon us, testing for tick-borne illnesses is increasing. Clinical suspicion of tick-borne disease should be based on patient characteristics including illness during tick season with symptoms such as fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, neck pain, skin rash, Bell's palsy, heart rhythm disturbances, hypotension, jaundice, sepsis, and possible tick exposure. If these criteria are met, there is risk for Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis. Endemic areas for Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis include the Northeastern and Upper Midwestern United States, into Canada.

If the patient presents with a classic erythema migrans "bullseye" rash, no testing is necessary and treatment for Lyme can be initiated while monitoring for symptoms of additional tick-borne illness. If there is no rash and clinical suspicion is high, testing may be appropriate and should include a Lyme serology test, which reflexes to confirmation IgG and IgM testing if the initial serology testing is positive or equivocal. Lyme serology can be insensitive in the first few weeks of infection, so repeat testing might be warranted. If there is concern for Babesia or Anaplasma, UVMHC offers PCR testing, which detects both. Testing in asymptomatic patients is not warranted.

THE APPROPRIATE TESTING FOR EACH DISEASE:

Disease	Appropriate Testing	Epic Code	Atlas Code	Mayo Access ID
Lyme Disease (Borrelia burgdorferi)	Lyme Antibody (UVMHC)	LAB3035	LYMAB	FAH5444
	Lyme Ab Screen, IgG and IgM (CVMC, PMC)	LAB14430	N/A	N/A
Babesiosis	Anaplasma and Babesia Testing by PCR	LAB17623	LAB17623	FAH6133
Anaplasma	Anaplasma and Babesia Testing by PCR	LAB17623	LAB17623	FAH6133

UVMHCN has implemented an Epic order-set, "Tick Panel, Symptomatic", which is only available in Epic and includes the following tests:

- Lyme Antibody
- Anaplasma and Babesia Testing by PCR

Please Note: The UVMHCN Tick Panel, Symptomatic is available to **Epic users only** and cannot be ordered via Atlas or Mayo Access. Non-Epic users will need to order these tests individually. Please do not order the Mayo test Tick-Borne Disease Antibodies Panel, Serum (Mayo Test ID TICKS) or Tick-Borne Panel, Molecular Detection, PCR, Blood (Mayo Test ID TIKLB) for these disease states. This testing is **not** recommended in these circumstances.

The Parasite Exam, Blood and the Hematology Smear Review will no longer be performed for Babesia or Anaplasma. Orders for these requests will be canceled and replaced with the Anaplasma/Babesia Testing by PCR.

For questions or concerns about this update, please contact UVMHC Laboratory Customer Service at (802) 847-5121.

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