

Due to skyrocketing increase in number of faecal H. Pylori Antigen (Ag) requests received from the region, from 3/11/2025 specific measures have been implemented at LabPLUS to better manage the demand:

A. Children (age <16 years)

One or more of the following is (are) required for the test to be approved:

- ☐ Ascertain status after eradication therapy (**minimal re-order interval: 4 weeks post completion of the course**)
- ☐ Family history of gastric cancer in first degree relative(s)
- ☐ Specialist gastroenterologist request or approval (see section on Minimal Re-order Interval)

Note:

The test is rarely indicated for documentation of infection in children. H. pylori is often acquired in infancy through faecal-oral route as an asymptomatic commensal organism, with a higher incidence of carriage in young people of Pacific Island, Maori and Asian ethnicity, economically disadvantaged and refugees. On the other hand, non-specific abdominal pain is common in childhood and may co-exist with H. pylori carriage which after being treated does not necessarily improve outcome of the abdominal pain. Asymptomatic household contacts (including children) do not routinely require screening or treatment.

Patients with symptoms consistent with:

- a. Peptic ulcer disease (left upper quadrant pain that may be exacerbated with eating and may occur nocturnally), or*
- b. Recurrent iron deficiency (that re-occurs after treatment and establishment of an iron sufficient diet) with no other source of blood loss evident.*

- should be referred for consideration of upper GI endoscopy and biopsy.

Further information can be found in the Starship Clinical Guideline – Helicobacter Pylori (H.Pylori) infection - Assessment and management of H.Pylori infection in childhood (age <15 years) – last published 6/12/2023 (accessed via: <https://www.starship.org.nz/guidelines/helicobacter-pylori-h-pylori-infection/>).

B. Adult (age ≥16 years)

The test will ONLY be approved if meets at least one of the following criteria:

- ☐ Never had H. Pylori Ag test
- ☐ Previous negative H. Pylori Ag result (**minimal re-order interval: 3 months**)
- ☐ Previous equivocal H. Pylori Ag result
- ☐ Previous positive H. Pylori diagnosis (**minimal re-order interval: 4 weeks post completion of course**)
- ☐ Previous sample: insufficient / inappropriate or sample labelling error

The decision to request for H. Pylori Ag test should be independent of considerations to refer for Adult Gastroenterology assessment e.g for gastroscopy. For details, please refer to "Auckland Region Community HealthPathways – Dyspepsia and Heartburn / GORD" |

Minimal Re-order Interval: for both children and adult:

Samples will NOT be retested within 4 weeks of a previous positive result

Samples will NOT be retested within 3 months of a previous negative result

These rules will not apply to equivocal, insufficient, inappropriate, sample labelling error or too watery samples.

To seek approval in re-instating a declined request e.g. because of unique clinical circumstance, the requestor should contact the Chemical Pathologist on call at LabPlus via Lablink at 09-3074949 ext. 22000 or email chemicalpathologist@adhb.govt.nz within 7 days from the date of sample receipt at LabPLUS, otherwise the sample will be discarded.