



Claire Rogers

Principal Biomedical Scientist
Head of Teaching and Diagnostic Unit
+44 (0) 20 7927 2318
claire.rogers@lshtm.ac.uk

London School of Hygiene & Tropical
Medicine
Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT

+44 (0)20 7636 8636 • www.lshtm.ac.uk

Laboratory Manager
Department of Microbiology

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Dear Colleague

Update to *Acanthamoeba* keratitis reference diagnosis service

It has been 6 months since the introduction of our combined *in vitro* culture / microscopy + probe-based qPCR *Acanthamoeba* keratitis (AK) diagnosis service. We are pleased to say uptake of the combined algorithm has been very good. Following review of the service, we will be making the following minor changes with effect from 1st January 2020:

- The turnaround time for the combined testing will be increased from 7 to 10 working days. This is to accommodate the high volume of samples received and to allow for analyses and written reports to be issued. Negative results will no longer be telephoned to users in advance of the written report, however any positive results from either culture or PCR will still be telephoned as soon as identified.
- The spun deposit from contact lens fluid samples from “side-by-side” cases will be combined for PCR testing. Culture will still be performed on left and right lenses and fluids. Charges will be reduced accordingly for these samples.
- Please note that you should NOT send scalpel blades as these rust in transit and render the sample unsuitable for PCR. PCR will no longer be performed on rusty samples which have been submitted containing blades.

Charges for laboratory investigation of *Acanthamoeba* keratitis will remain as follows:

- For combined culture + PCR £75
- For culture only £30

Charges for private testing can be obtained on request.

Guidelines for referral of specimens for *Acanthamoeba* investigation and our *Acanthamoeba* specific referral form, are available to download and print from: www.parasite-referencelab.co.uk

We would value your input. If you have any comments or queries regarding the service, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Rogers', written in a cursive style.

Claire Rogers

Head of Teaching & Diagnostics Unit & Principal Biomedical Scientist

Diagnostic Parasitology Laboratory

LSHTM