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Questions or comments?

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Eastern Pathology Alliance



[www.easternpathologyalliance.nhs.uk](http://www.easternpathologyalliance.nhs.uk)

If you have any requests for topics you'd like to see in future newsletters, please let us know...

# EPA LAB NEWS

As a reminder, we are trying to move all of the information about our services online on to our web site [www.easternpathologyalliance.nhs.uk](http://www.easternpathologyalliance.nhs.uk). You will find all of the information about which blood bottle/container/swab to use along with how long this will take before you get a result back. If you find anything is missing please let us know.

Nigel Roberts

## Newsletter Spotlight

### REJECTED SAMPLES

EPA laboratories received 353,310 requests in the quarter January to March 2024 from the Norfolk and Waveney ICS. Unfortunately we were not able to process all of these samples and rejected 3,774 for this period; corresponding to a 1.07% rejection rate.

We would expect this to be below 1% for the ICS and whilst the vast majority of locations fall well below this target there are some outliers. As part of a wider Blood Quality Improvement programme we are working to identify ICS locations where the rejection rates are greater than 1.5% and would like to work with them to reduce these.

The laboratory may reject samples for a number of reasons, broadly grouped into 4 main categories:

- **Sample quality** where samples may be clotted, haemolysed, under or overfilled, this is normally the result of difficult blood collection
- **Wrong sample/no sample.** Certain tests need to have blood collected into specific tubes, sometimes the wrong tube may be sent or no tube is received that is suitable for the requested tests to be performed
- **Labelling.** Where samples do not meet the minimum labelling requirement for the laboratory or do not have any patient demographics at all. This is mostly mitigated by the use of ICE paper and that printed labels on the paper
- **Other.** Covers any other reason why a sample may be rejected, this may include laboratory errors, inappropriately requested tests, or anything else which cannot easily be classified

Over the next 3 months we intend to send letters to GP practices where the rejection rates are higher than expected, outlining the main categories for rejection and offer to assist the surgery to identify causes and work to reduce these. However as users of our service if you notice or have concerns regarding rejected samples please reach out to EPA by emailing [LaboratoryQuality@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:LaboratoryQuality@nnuh.nhs.uk)

## VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is a very common test request within biochemistry and increasingly, we are receiving requests for vitamin D with the clinical details "TATT, health check, review".

The Endocrine Society Guideline (2024) recommends vitamin D testing only in patients with demonstrated bone abnormality e.g. diagnosed osteoporosis, suspected osteomalacia, documented hypo- or hypercalcaemia, nephrocalcinosis. In addition, it is also the recommendation that, following vitamin D supplementation, vitamin D should NOT be measured, unless no correction of the underlying, vitamin D-dependent, bone pathology is seen.

Following this specialist advice, EPA will add these recommendations to our vitamin D request on ICE. The guideline will be reiterated when vitamin D is requested, and we will ask users to state on the request that the patient has a diagnosis of bone or calcium abnormality, prior to the request being made. If you proceed with the request, we will then ask for users to confirm that the patient is not having their vitamin D status reassessed, following supplementation, for that reason alone.

Both of these changes are being made with the full support of the Endocrinology consultants in charge of the specialist bone metabolism clinic, hosted by the NNUH.

This change, along with several others, will be implemented over the coming months. Our aim is to reduce inappropriate testing in our patients by applying these diagnostic stewardship strategies, as well as reduce costs and pressure on the ICS as a whole.

## HOW TO REQUEST GENETICS FOR FAMILIAL HYPERCHOLESTEROLAEMIA (FH)

Cambridge Genetics Lab have authorised FH Genetics in primary care. Please see below the process if you wish to request a test.

1. Request the FH test on ICE as per instructions below, specific to your location.
2. A pop-up box<sup>1</sup> will appear informing you that you must select the "More Info" button which will generate the Cambridge University Hospital (CUH) Test Order Form for FH genetics<sup>2</sup>. The form will open up automatically in your browser. If this fails to open [East GLH FH Test Order Form ADOBE GH-RI-FRM-3 v1 so3CgTd.pdf \(backup-cuh-production.s3.amazonaws.com\)](#) can be used.
3. Print and complete the CUH Test Order Form.
4. Continue to generate and print the ICE request form as normal.
5. Staple the ICE request form AND the CUH Test Order Form together and send in specimen collection bag with one purple top EDTA blood sample to NNUH. **If both request forms are not received or the wrong blood bottle is used, the sample will not be processed and the patient will need another sample to be taken.**

**\*\*Note – for samples taken in Primary Care, please DO NOT put the sample in the indexer rack\*\***

If you have any questions or issues with the link, please email [fhassessment@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:fhassessment@nnuh.nhs.uk)

### Practices serving NNUH View

The screenshot shows the NNUH ICE system interface. The 'Family hypercholesterolaemia genetics' test is highlighted in a yellow circle. The interface includes a top navigation bar with various medical specialties, a left sidebar with test categories, and a main area with a list of tests. The 'Family hypercholesterolaemia genetics' test is listed under the 'Cardiology' category.

### Practices serving OEH View

The screenshot shows the OEH ICE system interface. The 'Family hypercholesterolaemia genetics' test is highlighted in a green circle. The interface includes a top navigation bar with various medical specialties, a left sidebar with test categories, and a main area with a list of tests. The 'Family hypercholesterolaemia genetics' test is listed under the 'Cardiology' category.

### Practices serving JPUH View

The screenshot shows the JPUH ICE system interface. The 'Family hypercholesterolaemia genetics' test is highlighted in a blue circle. The interface includes a top navigation bar with various medical specialties, a left sidebar with test categories, and a main area with a list of tests. The 'Family hypercholesterolaemia genetics' test is listed under the 'Cardiology' category.

Pop-up box<sup>1</sup>

The screenshot shows a pop-up box titled 'Request Options-- Web page Dialogue' for 'Family hypercholesterolaemia genetics'. It contains a 'PLEASE NOTE' section with instructions: 'In order to request the FH genetics test, you must print and complete the CUH Form by pressing the "More Info..." button and then attach the completed CUH Form to the ICE Request Form, otherwise the sample will NOT be processed.' There are 'More Info...' and 'OK' buttons at the bottom.

Test Order Form for FH genetics<sup>2</sup>

The screenshot shows the 'FAMILIAL HYPERCHOLESTEROLAEMIA RARE DISEASE GENOMIC TEST ORDER FORM' from the East Genomic Laboratory Hub. It includes sections for 'PATIENT DETAILS (or address label)', 'ORDERING CLINICIAN INFORMATION', 'SPECIMENS', 'GENOMIC TEST REQUIRED', 'CONSENT DISCUSSION WITH PATIENT', and 'THIS PATIENT AGREES TO BE CONTACTED ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH'. The form is designed for ordering a genomic test for familial hypercholesterolaemia.

## DUTY BIOCHEMIST EMAIL ADDRESS

Our Duty Biochemist email ([NNUH.DutyBiochemist@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:NNUH.DutyBiochemist@nnuh.nhs.uk)) is monitored from 0900-1730h on working days and is **ONLY intended for routine clinical biochemistry queries**

We aim to respond within 2 working days.

**For URGENT clinical biochemistry queries, please contact:**

### Duty Biochemist

0900-1730h on working days: NNUH Switchboard (01603 286286)

### Consultant on Call

Out of hours, weekends & bank holidays: NNUH Switchboard (01603 286286)

**NOTE, PLEASE DO NOT USE THIS EMAIL FOR OUTSTANDING CHASERS OR ADD-ON TESTS**

### Add-on Tests

Contact the Laboratory Office (01603 286929) 0900-1700h on working days

### O/S Results

Email [Pathoffice@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:Pathoffice@nnuh.nhs.uk) with patient name, DOB, NHS # and sample details

*Thank you*

## NNUH – PHLEBOTOMY SERVICES

### Book blood tests at a time to suit you

PLEASE NOTE PHLEBOTOMY CLINICS AT THE NORFOLK & NORWICH UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL ARE

**BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

DON'T WAIT AROUND.  
BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT BY EMAIL

[phlebotomy.services@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:phlebotomy.services@nnuh.nhs.uk)

OR BY TELEPHONE

**01603 286921**

APPOINTMENTS ARE AVAILABLE :

**MONDAY - FRIDAY**

**08:30 - 16:45**

(Excluding Bank Holidays)



We are still receiving patients who have been told by their GPs that the phlebotomy clinic at the NNUH is a walk-in service...

**PHLEBOTOMY CLINICS  
AT THE NNUH ARE  
BY  
APPOINTMENT  
ONLY**

## AMENDED ICE REQUEST FORMS & REPRINTED FORMS

**You must not amend an ICE request once it has been completed.**

Although the system will allow you to amend your request and the printed form will look as if the amendment has been accepted, only the original information is downloaded within the barcode so you will not receive the additional tests you have asked for.

**If you have missed a test off your original request, you must delete the original request off ICE and make a completely new request.**

Please also do not produce multiple copies, reprint or photocopy request forms from ICE for multiple use. Each request form contains a unique number which can only be used by the laboratory once. Each time a patient needs to be bled a completely new request must be made in ICE.

## **MICROBIOLOGY AND VIROLOGY ON-CALL (Out of Hours Service)**

On-call hours for urgent clinical advice for Microbiology and Virology operates between 5pm and 9am Monday to Thursday, 5pm Friday to 9am Monday, and on Bank Holidays from 9am on the Bank Holiday until 9am the following day.

There is a separate rota and phone access for the on-call Microbiology technician who should be contacted directly regarding the processing of urgent clinical specimens.

The on-call is for URGENT clinical advice and is usually manned by consultants who simultaneously cover enquiries from all three Acute Trusts as well as the community hospitals and all General Practices in the region.

There is also a separate on-call number for urgent bacteriology advice and for urgent virology advice. The departmental medical/clinical team do on-call in addition to their usual working week and do not operate a shift system. To ensure that the calls are appropriate for the urgent clinical issues, it is important that the service is used for on-call urgent clinical advice only, and not as an extension of the working day or an out of hours results service.

Please observe the following rules of engagement when contacting out of hours Microbiologist

- Calls should only be from SPR level and above and should seek urgent advice that cannot wait until normal working hours
- Please ensure that before calling Microbiology you have consulted the Trust antimicrobial guidelines on the Intranet or on microguide and checked patient results on the ICE system to ensure your question is not already answered
- Prior to phoning, please ensure you have all relevant clinical information to hand
  - Diagnosis/Clinical Impression including presentation
  - Significant past medical/surgical and drug history
  - Antimicrobial allergy history including recent antibiotics patient had received
  - Please look up results on ICE, including blood results, microbiology results and radiology reports if available prior to the call
- Please be clear with switchboard whether you require to contact the on-call Microbiologist for urgent clinical advice, the on-call Virologist for urgent clinical advice or the on-call Microbiology Technician regarding processing of urgent specimens

Thank you for your support.

**Dr Davis Nwaka**  
**Microbiology Service Lead**