

Helicobacter pylori culture (External Test)

Helicobacter pylori culture is performed for patients with evidence of persistent infection in order to establish antibiotic susceptibilities. These cultures are performed by the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) in London.

Preparation for the biopsy

- The patient should stop proton-pump inhibitors for 2 weeks and stop antibiotics for 4 weeks prior to procedure.
- The biopsy should only be performed Mon-Wed to ensure the sample arrives in the reference laboratory in good time. Ideally samples should arrive in the laboratory before 12 midday to ensure same-day onward transport.

Instructions to optimise the growth of Helicobacter spp. from gastric biopsy material

- Perform multiple gastric biopsies (5 to 6), at least 2 from the antrum and 2 from the anterior and posterior corpus respectively. Larger volumes increase the yield.
- All microbiology specimens should be taken with sterile forceps before the histology specimens are taken to reduce risk of contamination.
- Do not pool biopsies. There is a risk that the organism may not be isolated if any cross contamination occurs.
- Each biopsy should be placed in a separate sterile universal container, and covered in sterile saline.

After the biopsy

- Test is not orderable on Epic. Complete the [Gastrointestinal bacteria culture referral form](#), including Sender's Information (Name, HCP number, and ward), all 'Patient/source information', Date of collection under 'Sample information', and selecting 'Helicobacter' under Tests required.
 - Print completed form and send immediately to laboratory with labelled samples
 - Phone the laboratory on 07801292773 to let them know the sample is on the way
- The Microbiology Laboratory will organise onward transport to the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) in London
- Results should be available on Epic within 19 days under 'REF LAB - MICROBIOLOGY GENERIC REFERRAL TEST'