



## THE DIAGNOSTIC PARASITOLOGY LABORATORY

Tel: +44 (0)20 7927 2427. Fax: +44 (0)20 7637 0248. [www.parasite-referencelab.co.uk](http://www.parasite-referencelab.co.uk)

### ACANTHAMOEBA SPECIMEN REFERRAL FORM

<b>Patient Surname</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>Other names</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Date of Birth</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>m/f</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>NHS no.</b> (or Hosp no.)	<input type="text"/>	<b>Lab no.</b>	<input type="text"/>

<p><b>Name and address of doctor referring specimen:</b></p>   <p><b>ESSENTIAL INFORMATION :</b> Telephone number for contact relating to this specimen:</p>	<p><b>Name and address for reports (if different):</b></p>   <p><b>Name and address for invoices (if different):</b></p>   <p><b>Purchase order number:</b></p>
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<p><b>Type of specimen:</b> (Please tick as appropriate)</p> <p>Corneal scrape <input type="checkbox"/>    scalpel / needle (please circle as appropriate)</p> <p>Corneal biopsy <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Corneal swab <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify): .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Contact lens / fluid <input type="checkbox"/>    left / right / both (circle as appropriate)</p>	<p><b>Investigation required:</b></p> <p>Culture + PCR <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Culture only <input type="checkbox"/></p> <hr/> <p><b>Specimen date:</b></p>
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**Clinical / diagnostic details:**  
Please state if high risk and nature of risk

Please return form and specimen by post/courier to The Diagnostic Parasitology Laboratory, Faculty of Infectious & Tropical Diseases, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT **OR** via Hays DX to HPA Malaria Reference Lab, DX 6641200, Tottenham Crt RD92WC. **SEE OVER FOR SPECIMEN GUIDELINES**

**Guidelines for referral of specimens to the Diagnostic Parasitology Laboratory  
at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine  
for the laboratory diagnosis of *Acanthamoeba* keratitis (AK)**

Suitable sample types & sample preparation:

All specimens should be submitted for testing together with a completed ***Acanthamoeba* DPL referral form** (overleaf, and available to download and print from: [www.parasite-referencelab.co.uk](http://www.parasite-referencelab.co.uk)).

The greatest laboratory diagnostic sensitivity for AK is achieved through use of both *in vitro* culture / microscopy and a probe-based qPCR.

Please ensure all containers are tightly screwed and use Parafilm (NOT Sellotape) to prevent leakage during transit.

- **Clinical samples** (corneal scrapes, biopsies, fluids, swabs etc.) should be sent in a small volume (1 – 2mL ideal) of sterile saline or sterile distilled water in a small (<5mL) sterile vial / tube.

Material from a **needle or blade scrape** should be rinsed into the saline / water. **Please remove blades or needles after rinsing.** Do NOT leave the blade in the tube as it rusts: this inhibits our PCR and may have a detrimental effect on culture isolation.

**Swabs or washings** appear to be less efficient in detecting the organism. If swabs must be sent then please add a small volume of sterile saline or sterile distilled water to the swab to prevent drying. **Please do not send dry swabs.**

Punch **biopsies** or portions of excised cornea may also be submitted: put sample into a small volume of sterile saline / distilled water in a small sterile vial.

- **Non-clinical samples** - contact lenses: should be sent in their lens cases (ie in used contact lens fluid.) Please note: we do not test commercial contact lens solutions (other than that already in patients' contact lens cases). Culture is performed on lenses and fluids; PCR is performed on fluids only. NB: Isolation of *Acanthamoeba* from contact lens-related specimens, whilst suggestive, does not necessarily implicate the amoeba as causing the patient's symptoms. Amoebic genera (other than *Acanthamoeba*), flagellates, ciliates and other organisms may be found in contaminated washing fluids and on lenses, particularly with poor lens hygiene.
- **Culture-positive samples:** please send original culture plate if possible, or blocks of agar from the plate in a sterile vial.

Specimen turnaround time (TAT):

Up to 10 working days.

Positive results from either culture or qPCR method will be telephoned in advance of the final result.

Contact:

Please telephone the laboratory with queries, or for advice: 020 7927 2427.