November 2014

Important Information for Providers

Discontinuation of Rubella IgM (not IgG) Antibody testing

Effective immediately, Allina Health Laboratory will no longer perform or refer testing for IgM-class antibodies to rubella and any orders received will be canceled by the laboratory. Mayo Medical Laboratories no longer performs this testing. The CDC determined in 2005 that endemic transmission of rubella no longer occurs in the United States, and the majority of the rare cases seen here have in persons born outside the US.

Given the low prevalence of rubella in the US, routine serologic testing for IgM-class antibodies to this virus may yield false positive results, which can negatively impact patient care. This is especially problematic when rubella IgM testing is included in the routine screening of asymptomatic, pregnant women. This could lead to unnecessary parental anxiety or termination of healthy pregnancies. Testing for IgG-class antibodies to rubella is very useful and will continue to be performed to document immunity to this virus (Rubella IgG Antibody, LAB713).

If a case of acute rubella infection or congenital rubella syndrome is suspected, immediately contact the state health department with clinical details.

- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) 651-201-5414
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS), Bureau of Communicable Diseases 608-267-9003

Rubella Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR, or PCR) is available for rubella case confirmation at the state public health laboratories. After consultation with the health department, providers will be asked to collect and send a PCR specimen to when rubella is suspected. Serologic testing for acute rubella infection would only be considered if PCR specimens cannot be obtained.
References:


3. MDH website: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/rubella/hcp/labtesting.pdf
