



Eastern Health

Guideline Statement

To: All physicians and nurse practitioners within Eastern Health
Date: Nov 17, 2014
From: Dr. Christopher Sharpe and Dr. Lucinda Whitman, Hematology Laboratory

Subject: Indications for ESR Testing

The number of requests for ESR (erythrocyte sedimentation rate) testing is extremely high and the vast majority of requests are of no clinical utility. In addition, a significant proportion of individual ESR tests do not arrive in the Hematology Laboratory until after the allowed period has elapsed between sample collection and sample testing which further hinders the clinical usefulness of this test. CRP (C-reactive protein) testing remains available within Eastern Health at the Regional Health Centres and should be ordered in place of an ESR if clinically indicated. CRP is available as a stat test at the Regional Health Center. The minimum turnaround time for an ESR 2 hours.

As a result, requests for ESR testing will only be processed in the following clinical situations:

1. Rheumatologic/Inflammatory states that are currently under the care of a Rheumatologist, Rheumatologic/Inflammatory states that will be consulted to Rheumatology, or during the investigation of an acute Rheumatologic/Inflammatory state upon the advice of a Rheumatologist
2. In the setting of septic joints as ordered by or under the direction of an Orthopedic Surgeon
3. Advanced-stage Hodgkin Lymphoma for prognostic purposes as ordered by or under the direction of a Clinical Hematologist

If one of the above-listed indications for ESR testing exists, specific clinical information that relates to the reason for ordering the ESR must be provided, including the name of the Rheumatologist, Orthopedic Surgeon or Clinical Hematologist involved. In the absence of this information the ESR test will be cancelled and reported as **“this test has been cancelled because an acceptable clinical indication was not provided with the request”**.

Consideration may be given to individual request if there is discussion with your laboratory.

If any concerns arise regarding this guideline statement, please contact the Hematology Laboratory at 777-6550