



**SAN MATEO COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY
TEST INFORMATION**

Section: Syphilis Serology

Test Name: *Treponema pallidum* – Particle Agglutination (TP-PA)

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| Test Includes: <i>Treponema pallidum</i> – Particle Agglutination | |
| <i>Reporting</i> | |
| Results Available: 7 days from receipt | Contact Number: (650) 573-2500 |
| <i>Reference</i> | |
| Method: Agglutination | |
| Turnaround Time: 7 days | Reference Range: Non-Reactive |
| Limitations: May not detect a recent infection, or infection in a person with a severely compromised immune system. | Interpretation: Non-reactive indicates that the patient does not have detectable antibody to the infectious agent. Reactive indicates that the patient has detectable antibody to the infectious agent, and depending on the clinical picture, may have a current or past infection. |
| <i>Specimen Requirements</i> | |
| Specimen Collection: Venipuncture | Sample Type: Blood |
| Volume/Amount Required: 7-10 mls whole blood or 5 ml serum or plasma | Preferred Specimen: Serum, plasma |
| Collection/Preservation: Red top or tiger top tube | Storage Instructions: Do not freeze or refrigerate whole blood. Separated serum may be held at 2-8° C. |
| Causes for Rejection: Discrepancy in specimen identification; insufficient quantity of specimen; gross hemolysis | Sample Container: Red top or tiger top tube |
| Sample Test Kit: | Availability: Performed Friday |
| <p>Diagnostic Information: The Serodia TP-PA is a qualitative gelatin particle agglutination assay for the detection of <i>Treponema pallidum</i> antibodies in human serum. The test is based on the agglutination of colored gelatin particles sensitized with <i>T. pallidum</i> antigen. Serum containing specific antibodies will react with the antigen sensitized gelatin particles to form a smooth mat of agglutinated particles. A compact button formed by the settling of non-agglutinated particles characterizes negative reactions. Unlike the nontreponemal tests, once the TP-PA test becomes reactive, it remains reactive for many years. Since the reactivity found with the TP-PA does not indicate response to therapy, it is not suitable for monitoring treatment. The TP-PA test does not distinguish between syphilis and other treponematoses such as yaws, pinta and bjel. TP-PA is run only if the RPR card test results are reactive.</p> | |
| <i>Specimen Submission</i> | |
| Request Form: Standard Clinical Test Request form or through computer interface | Specimen Handling: Use Universal Precautions |
| Transport Temperature: Ambient temperature for clotted blood; separated serum | Shipping Requirements: Ship on cold packs (2-8°C), or frozen (-20°C) and mailed on dry |



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| at 2-8°C (refrigerated) or -20°C (frozen). | ice. |
| <i>Billing</i> | |
| CPT Code(s): 86781 | Fees: \$15.00 |
| Effective Date: July 1, 2008 | |