

**MENINGITIS/ENCEPHALITIS (ME) PATHOGEN MULTIPLEX PCR, CSF**  
14504/LAB14504

**Quick Reference:**

Effective June 21, 2022, the Allina Health Central Microbiology Laboratory will offer an in-house Meningitis/Encephalitis Pathogen Multiplex PCR Panel (ME Panel/14504) for rapid detection of pathogens from cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). Previously this panel was available only as a send out.

**Details:**

Historically, CSF evaluation for suspected meningitis/encephalitis required orders for multiple individual PCR tests. The new multiplex panel test includes 6 bacterial, 7 viral, and one fungal target, eliminating the need for individual orders. The new panel will allow initial diagnosis of Central nervous system (CNS) infections with a turnaround time of less than 24 hours, depending on location and transport time.

**Targets included:**

<p><b>BACTERIA:</b></p> <p><i>Escherichia coli K1</i> <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> <i>Neisseria meningitidis</i> <i>Streptococcus agalactiae (Group B strep)</i> <i>Streptococcus pneumonia</i></p>	<p><b>VIRUSES:</b></p> <p>Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Enterovirus Herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV1) Herpes simplex virus 2 (HSV2) Human herpesvirus 6 (HHV-6) Human parechovirus Varicella zoster virus (VZV)</p>
<p><b>YEAST:</b></p> <p><i>Cryptococcus neoformans/gattii</i></p>	

- Physicians can order a new ME multiplex panel when central nervous infection is suspected.
- For initial diagnoses of central nervous infections, *avoid* ordering multiple single tests (HSV1/2, VZV, Enterovirus, CMV, etc.) as the turnaround time for these tests is longer. Order the ME panel instead.
- Do *not* order duplicate ME panel within 7 days of initial testing (in a single admission) unless approved by Infectious disease clinicians.
- Spinal Fluid from lumbar puncture is the only acceptable sample type; shunt fluid is not acceptable as pathogens caused by shunt infections are not included in the panel.
- The panel does not replace the Spinal fluid culture, stain (6557/LAB6557). A culture and stain should be ordered *in conjunction with* the ME Panel.

QUESTIONS: Contact your Allina Health Laboratory account representative, or our Client Services department