SydPath
ST VINCENT'S PATHOLOGY

www.sydpath.com.au

FAECAL CALPROTECTIN INFORMATION SHEET

INTRODUCTION

Calprotectin is a zinc binding protein primarily localised to the granules of neutrophils and the surface of monocytes and macrophages. When measured in faeces its excretion is highly correlated with radioisotopic measures of gastrointestinal inflammation, which are considered the gold standard test. Faecal calprotectin testing is an aid for the diagnosis and management of inflammatory bowel disease.

INDICATIONS

Estimation of faecal calprotectin levels is primarily indicated to help differentiate inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) from irritable bowel syndrome and other non-inflammatory disturbances of bowel function. It may also be useful in the monitoring IBD therapy and relapse prediction.

SAMPLE COLLECTION

Patients should stop aspirin, NSAIDs and proton pump inhibitors for 2 weeks before sample collection as these may lead to false-positive results. As there can be considerable result variation, consideration should be given to collection of more than one sample on separate occasions.

INTERPRETATION

In patients greater than 4 years of age values less than 50ug/g are considered normal. Values between 50-150ug/g are considered borderline. Values above 250ug/g are usually associated with active IBD but testing is less sensitive for ileocaecal Crohn's disease than ulcerative colitis. Sequential testing may be used to monitor response to therapy and disease relapse. Disorders other than IBD that may lead to low positive results include infectious gastroenteritis, untreated coeliac disease, colorectal and gastric cancer, microscopic colitis, cystic fibrosis, diverticulitis, liver cirrhosis and untreated food allergy.

SPECIAL BILLING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FAECAL CALPROTECTIN TESTING

SydPath has been providing this test for some years for which it has been billing patients directly because there was no Medicare rebate available. Recently this has changed, and a Medicare rebate has become available, under highly restricted conditions which are not able to be monitored by SydPath. Under these circumstances, and to continue to provide the test, SydPath has made some changes to billing arrangements.

<u>All pathology tests, undertaken on the same day as a faecal calprotectin test (including the faecal calprotectin test itself) will not be bulk billed.</u> Instead, the patient will be billed directly for these tests, but at the bulk-bill rate, plus a maximum of up to a $50 fee. The patient will then be able to reimburse most of this cost directly from Medicare, with the possible exception of the faecal calprotectin. Under some very restricted circumstances, the faecal calprotectin itself may also be reimbursable.