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Culture - colonic tissue

A colonic tissue culture is a lab test to check for the cause of disease. The sample of tissue for the test is taken from the large intestine during a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy.

How the Test is Performed

The health care provider removes a piece of tissue from your large intestine. This is done during a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy.

- The sample is sent to a lab.
- It is placed in a special dish that contains a gel. Bacteria and other organisms can grow in this gel. The dish is then stored at a certain temperature.
- The lab team checks the sample daily. They check to see if bacteria, viruses, or fungi have grown.

If certain germs grow, more tests will be done to identify them. This helps decide the best treatment.

How to Prepare for the Test

There is no specific preparation needed for a culture itself. However, you will have to prepare for the sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy if that is how your provider is getting the tissue sample. Speak with your provider about how to prepare.

How the Test will Feel

Once the sample is taken, the culture does not involve you. Therefore, there is no pain.

Why the Test is Performed

Your provider may order this test if you have signs or symptoms of a large intestine infection. Colonic tissue culture is only done occasionally. More often, tests are done on stool to identify a large intestine infection. A colonic tissue culture is most often done only when other tests, such as a stool culture, could not identify the cause of infection.

Normal Results

A normal result means that no disease-causing organisms have grown in the lab dish.

Some "healthy" bacteria, called bowel flora, are normally found in the gut. The growth of such bacteria during this test does not mean there is an infection.

Normal value ranges may vary slightly among different laboratories. Talk to your provider about your test results.

What Abnormal Results Mean

An abnormal result means that disease-causing organisms have grown in the lab dish. These organisms may include:

- *Clostridioides difficile* bacteria
- Cytomegalovirus
- *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria
- Salmonella bacteria
- Shigella bacteria

These organisms may lead to colon infections or diarrhea.

Risks

There is very minimal risk associated with the procedure. In rare cases, excessive bleeding could occur when a tissue sample is taken.

Alternative Names

Colonic tissue culture

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