
Subject: Important Update to Malaria PCR Assay, Test Code: MP00830

Dear Submitter,

Beginning **August 13, 2026**, the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene will implement an updated Malaria PCR assay that includes a fifth malaria target, *Plasmodium knowlesi*. This enhancement expands the assay's ability to characterize malaria-positive specimens and supports state and regional malaria surveillance efforts.

Background:

As a newly designated Midwest Regional Reference Laboratory for the Parasitology Surveillance Network (PSN), WSLH has updated its malaria PCR assay to enhance characterization of malaria-positive specimens and support regional surveillance efforts. Additional information about the PSN is available at: <https://www.slh.wisc.edu/wcln-surveillance/surveillance/parasitology-surveillance-network/>

WSLH continues to request submission of all malaria-positive specimens identified in Wisconsin for confirmatory testing, species characterization, and surveillance activities.

Assay Enhancements

The updated assay will continue to detect the four malaria species currently included in testing (*Plasmodium falciparum*, *Plasmodium vivax*, *Plasmodium ovale*, and *Plasmodium malariae*) and will now also detect *Plasmodium knowlesi*, a malaria parasite known to cause human disease. Addition of this target will enable more comprehensive characterization of malaria-positive specimens submitted for surveillance testing.

Submission and Testing Information

There are no changes to specimen submission requirements, shipping procedures, specimen stability criteria, or test cost. Testing remains fee exempt.

This assay continues to be intended for surveillance purposes only and is not intended for primary diagnosis. Laboratories should continue to perform in-house identification of blood parasites and submit all malaria-positive blood smears, along with an EDTA whole blood specimen, to WSLH for enhanced surveillance testing.

For complete test information, please visit the Test Directory:

<https://apps.slh.wisc.edu/testrefsearch/public/searchTestDetails/8322/m/getTestsAlpha>

Questions may be directed to WSLH Customer Service at 800-862-1013.

Sincerely,

Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
Communicable Disease Division

