

Listeria

General:

Listeria are mobile gram-positive coccoid rods and are found in many food products (plant products, e.g. mushrooms or lettuce; animal products, e.g. sausages like salami and soft cheese, milk). It is important that Listeria can develop, at temperatures of around 4 degrees Celsius. Listeria are generally tolerated by the organism at low bacterial counts. Up to 30% of healthy individuals can be asymptomatic carriers. Listeria monocytogenes is clinically important. In severe cases it can lead to sepsis, meningitis, encephalitis, endocarditis, conjunctivitis or local infections (monocytic angina). Persons with increased risk factors are elder persons, patients suffering from achlorhydria, and malignomas, drug addicted and persons with immunosuppression, e.g. in hemodialysis patients after kidney transplantation.

During pregnancy, Listeria (Listeria monocytogenes) represents a fundamental risk. A maternal infection might present with a slight feverish disorder, often misinterpreted as common cold. Depending on the stage of the infection, an intrauterine infection might lead either to fetal death or to meningitis, encephalitis, sepsis or granulomatosis infantiseptica. In an asymptomatic infection of the birth channel, the germs can be transmitted to the child during delivery and lead to the described symptoms with a delay of a few days.

Apart from the bacteriological detection, serological diagnostics should also be considered. The O- and H-agglutinins can be detected serologically in serum. Only H-agglutinins are specific, O-antibodies often show cross reactions with other gram-positive bacteria. Follow up is important.

The following tests are available:

- **Listeria monocytogenes DNA in amniotic fluid**

Material: 1 ml amniotic fluid

TAT: 7-10 days*

Method: PCR

- **Listeria monocytogenes DNA in CSF**

Material: 1 ml CSF

TAT: 7-10 days*

Method: PCR

- **Listeria culture, bacteriological detection[^]**

Material: Vaginal swab, throat and ear swabs of newborns, amniotic fluid, excrement

TAT: 7-10 days*

Method: swab, culture

Ref.- range: negative

For complete list of laboratory test offered at Freiburg Medical Laboratory, please visit
<http://www.fml-dubai.com/parameter-listings/>