

For Individual Laboratory to Complete:

**EBV-VCA IgG
Enzyme Immunoassay**

Laboratory Name		
Adopted		
Reviewed		
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Revised		
Supercedes		

Method: Diamedix Corp., Immun simplicity®
Manual or in conjunction with one of the Diamedix Automated EIA Systems such as the MAGO Plus, the DSX, or the DS2. For *In Vitro* Diagnostic Use.

Clinical Significance

Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is a member of the *herpesvirus* family that infects human lymphocytes (1,2). It is known to cause infectious mononucleosis (IM) and is transmitted primarily by saliva. EBV has been detected in oropharyngeal secretions of healthy, asymptomatic adults, and is a possible source of infection for susceptible individuals (1,2,3). As with other herpesviruses, EBV causes a persistent latent infection with intermittent reactivations. EBV infection is usually asymptomatic in infants and young children. In adolescents and young adults infection usually results in IM (1,3,4,5,6). Diagnosis is generally based on the characteristic symptoms of sore throat, lymphadenopathy, fever, splenomegaly, and possibly the presence of heterophile antibodies (1,6). Because not all symptoms may be present and, since other infectious agents such as *Toxoplasma gondii* and cytomegalovirus may cause similar symptoms, serological detection of circulating antibodies is an important step in the diagnosis of EBV infection (1,6).

Humoral response to primary EBV infections appears to be quite rapid. Antibodies to EBV are made to various viral proteins, with specific antibodies correlating to disease state. In acute infection, IgM and then IgG antibodies are sequentially made to EA-D, VCA and EBNA. Current or recent infection is marked by the presence of IgM antibodies to VCA, EA-D and EBNA. IgG antibodies to VCA and EA-D are normally present in current infection, while IgG antibodies to EBNA are absent. Post-EBV infection is indicated by sustaining IgG antibody to VCA and EBNA and the absence of IgM antibodies (1,3,8). Thus, the monitoring of EBV antibody patterns may assist in the diagnosis of EBV infection since individual levels of specific antibodies may not necessarily be indicative of disease but can be of diagnostic importance when monitored as a profile.

The indirect fluorescent antibody (IFA) assays for detecting antibodies to EBV antigens have been largely replaced by enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISA or EIA) which are easier to perform, easier to interpret and amenable to automation.

The Immunosimplicity[®] Is-EBV-VCA IgG Test Kit is an EIA procedure intended for the qualitative and semi-quantitative detection of VCA IgG antibodies and can be performed either manually or in conjunction with the MAGO[®] Plus Automated EIA Processor.

Principle of The Procedure

Recombinant VCA antigen is bound to microwells. Diluted patient sera, Cut-Off Calibrator and controls are placed in the microwells and incubated. Anti-VCA IgG antibodies, if present, will bind to the antigen forming antigen-antibody complexes. Residual sample is eliminated by aspirating and washing. Conjugate (horseradish peroxidase-labeled anti-human IgG) is added and will bind to these complexes. Unbound conjugate is removed by aspiration and washing. Substrate is then added and incubated. In the presence of bound enzyme the substrate is converted to an end product. The absorbance of this end product can be read spectrophotometrically at 450 nm (reference 600-630 nm). Color development above a certain level denotes the presence of antibody.

Specimen Collection

Whole blood should be collected by accepted medical techniques. Separated serum should remain at 22oC for no longer than 8 hours. If assays are not completed within 8 hours, serum should be refrigerated (2-8oC). If assays are not completed within 48 hours, or the separated sample is to be stored beyond 48 hours, samples should be frozen at -20oC. Avoid multiple freeze-thaw cycles. Prior to testing, bring frozen sera to room temperature slowly and mix gently, avoiding foam formation. Specimens containing visible particulate matter should be clarified by centrifugation before testing. Grossly contaminated, hemolyzed, lipemic, or icteric specimens should not be used. If paired sera analysis is to be performed, obtain the second sample at least two weeks after the first sample. Test both samples within the same assay.

CAUTION: Serum samples must not be heat-inactivated prior to use.
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Reagents

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Antigen Wells | Twelve, 8-well microwell breakapart strips, color-coded yellow, coated with purified recombinant (<i>E. coli</i> as vector) VCA antigen (a 47kd fusion protein of 53 amino acids from the c-terminal half of p18). |
| Cut-off Calibrator | One vial with blue cap containing 0.5 ml of human serum or defibrinated plasma, weakly reactive for VCA IgG antibodies, 0.1% sodium azide. The Cut-Off Calibrator is used to determine the cut-off of the assay. |
| Low Positive Control | One vial with white cap containing 0.25 ml of human serum or defibrinated plasma, 0.1% sodium azide. Assigned range printed on label. The positive control is used to control the low range of the assay. |

Negative Control One vial with black cap containing 0.25 ml of non-reactive human serum or defibrinated plasma. Assigned range printed on the label. The Negative Control is used to control the negative range of the assay.

Note: The Cut-Off Calibrator and controls are prepared from different serum lots.

Sample B Diluent One bottle with blue cap containing 60 ml of Phosphate buffer with protein stabilizers. Contains Proclin™ 300, 15 ppm active ingredient. Color-coded blue.

Wash T Concentrate Two bottles with clear caps containing 60 ml of Tris buffer with detergent and Proclin™ 300, 15 ppm active ingredient. Each bottle is sufficient to make 1 liter of wash solution.

Conjugate One bottle with red cap containing 25 ml goat anti-human immunoglobulin G labeled with horseradish peroxidase. Also includes protein stabilizers and preservatives. Color-coded pink.

Substrate HRP One amber bottle with brown cap containing 25 ml buffered TMB color solution (3,3',5,5' Tetramethylbenzidine).

Stop N Solution One bottle with white cap containing 30 ml of 1 N Sulfuric Acid. **CAUTION:** Acids are corrosive. Avoid contact with skin or eyes. If contact is made, flush area with copious amounts of water.

Store these reagents at 2 to 8° C.

Other Materials Required

Manual Users:

1. Wash bottle or automated microplate washer
2. Pipettors capable of dispensing appropriate volumes
3. Timer
4. One liter graduated cylinder
5. One liter wash solution reservoir
6. Deionized or distilled water
7. Absorbent toweling
8. Tubes or microwell plate for serum dilution
9. Reader capable of reading absorbance at 450nm, reference at 600 or 630 nm.

Diamedix Automated EIA System Users:

1. One liter graduated cylinder
2. Deionized or distilled water
3. Dilution containers as appropriate to the system.
4. Sample and Reagent tips required by system.
5. Reagent containers required by system.

Warnings:

1. Handle samples, Calibrator, controls and the materials that contact them as potential biohazards. Each donor unit in the Calibrator and controls has been found negative for Hepatitis B surface antigen and HIV-1 antibodies by FDA-approved third generation tests. However, because no method can offer complete assurance that HIV-1, Hepatitis B virus, or other infectious agents are absent, these materials should be handled at the Biosafety Level 2 as recommended for any potentially infectious serum or blood specimen in the Centers for Disease Control/ National Institutes of Health manual, "Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories", 1993.
2. Never pipette by mouth.
3. Avoid contact with open skin and mucous membranes.
4. Certain of the test reagents contain Proclin™ 300 as a preservative. When disposing of reagents containing Proclin™ 300, flush drains with copious amounts of water to dilute the active components below active levels.
5. Serum components contain sodium azide as preservative. Azides are reported to react with lead and copper in plumbing to form compounds that may become explosive. When disposing of solutions containing sodium azide, flush with copious amounts of water to minimize the build up of metal azide compounds.
6. Sodium azide inhibits horseradish peroxidase activity. Care must be taken to ensure that azide is not carried over from other reagents into conjugate and substrate steps.
7. Avoid contamination of the TMB substrate solution with conjugate or other oxidants which will cause the solution to change color prematurely.
8. The substrate contains 3,3' 5,5' Tetramethylbenzidine(TMB)which has shown possible mutagenic effects in laboratory experiments.

Calibration

This test uses an in-house reference standard (or Calibrator). The Calibrator has been derived from weakly positive sera and is titrated to an absorbance value equivalent to the cut-off of the assay. Samples whose absorbances exceed this value are considered positive for VCA IgG antibodies and samples whose absorbances are less than this value are considered negative for VCA IgG antibodies. To account for the inherent variations in enzyme immunoassays an equivocal range of $\pm 10\%$ has been included at the assay cut-off.

Quality Control

- a) If paired sera controls are desired, it is recommended that a four-fold dilution of a sample with an Index Value of between 3.0 and 4.0 is first made in Sample Diluent and then diluted according to assay procedures. The undilute and 4-fold diluted material will provide a simulated serum pair.
- b) The Positive and Negative Controls must be included in each test run.
- c) The absorbance of the Blank must be < 0.25 .
- d) The absorbance of the Cut-Off Calibrator must be > 0.10 .

- e) The Positive and Negative Controls must be within their assigned ranges.
- f) The Negative and Positive controls are intended to monitor for substantial reagent failure. The Positive control will not ensure precision at the assay cut-off.

If any of these criteria is not met, the run is invalid and must be repeated.

Note: Additional controls may be tested according to guidelines or requirements of local, state, or federal regulations or accrediting organizations.

Procedure

Allow all test components and patient samples to warm to room temperature before use. Invert reagent bottles gently several times before use. Return promptly to the refrigerator after use.

Prepare Wash Solution by adding 50 ml of Wash Concentrate to one liter with deionized or distilled H₂O.

Manual Users:

1. Prepare 1:21 dilutions of the Cut-Off Calibrator (in triplicate), controls and patient samples in Sample Diluent. (e.g., by addition of 10 µl of sample to 200 µl of Sample Diluent).
2. Mix sample dilutions gently by withdrawing and expelling in a pipette 2-3 times or by vortex mixing for 2 or 3 seconds. Transfer 100 µl of Calibrator, controls and diluted patient samples, to the antigen wells. Avoid formation of bubbles when transferring diluted samples.

NOTE: Include one well which contains 100 µl of Sample Diluent as a reagent blank. This will ultimately be used to "zero" the photometer before reading test results.

3. Allow the wells to incubate at room temperature (18-30°C) for 30 ± 5 minutes.
4. Aspirate or discard the contents of the wells. Remove excess moisture in the wells by tapping on paper toweling. Wash the wells by rinsing 3 times with at least 300 µl of Wash Solution. Remove excess moisture from the wells after washing. When using an automated washer, follow the manufacturer's instructions.
5. Place 100 µl of Conjugate into each well, avoiding bubble formation.
6. Allow the wells to incubate uncovered at room temperature (18-30° C) for 30 ± 5 minutes.
7. Wash the wells as described in Step 4 above.

8. Place 100 µl of Substrate into each well, avoiding bubble formation.
9. Allow the wells to incubate uncovered at room temperature (18-30°C) for 30 ± 5 minutes.
10. Place 100 µl of Stop Solution into each well, avoiding bubble formation.
11. Read the absorbance of each well at 450 nm using a reference wavelength of 600-630 nm. The plate should be read within 60 minutes of adding Stop Solution.

Diamedix Automated EIA System Users:

If using one of Diamedix's Automated EIA Systems, please refer to the corresponding Operating Manual for the test setup, procedure, and accessories/consumables needed.

Calculation of Results

Calculate the MEAN absorbance of the Cut-off Calibrator. **Note:** When calculating the mean absorbance value for the Cut-Off Calibrator exclude any absorbance value that deviates by more than 15% from the mean of the three absorbance values. Use the mean of the remaining two replicates in calculations. Exclusion of more than one of the three absorbance values invalidates the run.

$$\frac{\text{Absorbance of Sample}}{\text{Mean Absorbance of Cut-off Calibrator}} = \text{Index Value}$$

The Diamedix Automated EIA Systems will calculate results using the above formula and print them automatically.

Example: Absorbance values obtained for the Calibrator:
0.276, 0.288, 0.258 (after subtraction of Blank)

Mean Absorbance of Cut-off Calibrator = 0.274

Sample Absorbance = 1.150

Index Value 1.150 / 0.274 = 4.2

Reference Ranges

The following is only a guide to interpretation. **Each laboratory can establish its own "normal" ranges based on populations encountered.**

Index < 0.90	No detectable VCA IgG antibody; result does not exclude EBV infection. An additional sample should be tested within 4-6 weeks if early infection is suspected.
Index ≥ 1.10	VCA IgG antibody detected. Indicative of current or past infection.
Index 0.90-1.09	Equivocal for antibodies to VCA. Sample can be retested, tested by another method or a new sample can be tested.

Reporting Results

When the Index Value is reported for a single specimen the following statement should be included: "The following results were obtained with the Is-EBV-VCA Test Kit. The magnitude of the measured result, above the cut-off, is not indicative of the total amount of antibody present. The magnitude of the reported IgG level cannot be correlated to an endpoint titer".

When the assay is used semi-quantitatively, the following statement should be included when reporting results: "Timing of specimen collection for paired sera may be critical. In some patients, antibody titers may rise to significant levels and fall again to lower or undetectable levels within a month. Other patients may not develop significant antibody levels. Culture results, serology and antigen detection methods should all be appropriately used along with clinical findings for diagnosis".

Paired Sera

To determine a significant difference between acute/convalescent serum pairs, both specimens should be run within the same assay. The maximum Index Value for the acute serum is 2.3. If the acute serum result is > 2.3 the paired sera analysis cannot be used. Studies performed have shown that a 1.5-fold to a 2.2-fold (mean 1.9-fold \pm 1.5 SD) increase in Index ratio (convalescent serum Index Value / acute serum Index Value) corresponds to a four-fold increase in VCA IgG antibody titer. Therefore, any serum pair with an Index ratio >1.5 is indicative of a significant antibody increase. Index ratios between ≥ 1.4 to ≤ 1.5 are considered equivocal for a significant antibody increase and require the user to either retest or obtain a new convalescent specimen within 2 weeks. Index ratios of <1.4 are not indicative of a significant antibody increase between acute and convalescent specimens. An acute serum with an Index Value of <0.90 and a convalescent serum with an Index Value of >1.10 is considered a seroconversion. It is not necessary to determine a significant antibody increase between acute and convalescent, it has already occurred. It is only necessary to determine a significant antibody increase for specimens which have an acute Index Value of >0.90 .

Procedure Notes

1. Do not interchange reagents from different reagent lots except for Sample **B** Diluent, Wash **T** Concentrate, Substrate **HRP** and Stop **N** Solution.
2. Do not use reagents beyond their expiration date.
3. Store unused reagents at 2 to 8°C.
4. Incubations above or below the recommended temperatures or times may give erroneous results.
5. The EIA method is a very sensitive technique. Maintain consistent pipetting technique, incubation times, and temperature conditions throughout the test procedure. Cross contamination between reagents can invalidate the test.

6. Antigen coated microwells should be stored with the desiccant in the resealable bag provided and returned to the refrigerator immediately after use.
7. (*Manual Procedure Only*) The washing procedure is very important and requires special attention. (Please refer to the Procedure section)
NOTE: *Improperly washed wells may give erroneous results.*
8. The reported concentration of anti-VCA IgG in a given specimen determined with assays from different manufacturers can vary due to differences in assay methods and reagent specificity.

Limitations

1. The results obtained with the Diamedix Is-EBV-VCA IgG Test Kit serve only as an aid to diagnosis and should not be interpreted as diagnostic in themselves.
2. Assay performance characteristics have not been established for visual result determination.
3. The test should be performed on serum. The use of whole blood or plasma has not been established.
4. There is a possibility of assay cross-reactivity with specimens containing anti-*E.coli* antibody.
5. Inaccurate results could occur in the presence of and/or sample contamination with *E. coli*.
6. The performance characteristics have not been established for patients with nasopharyngeal carcinoma, Burkitt's lymphoma, other EBV-associated lymphadenopathies, and other EBV-associated diseases other than EBV-related mononucleosis.
7. Since VCA IgG antibodies are present in normal, convalescent sera, a single result cannot be used for diagnosis. Accurate interpretation of EBV infection is based on the results from VCA IgG, VCA IgM, EBNA IgG, EA-D IgG, EA-D IgM, heterophile antibody testing as well as evaluation of paired sera.
8. Screening of the general population should not be performed. The positive predictive value depends on the likelihood of Epstein Barr Virus being present. Testing should only be performed when clinical symptoms are present or exposure is suspected.
9. Results from immunosuppressed patients should be interpreted with caution.
10. The performance characteristics of the Is-EBV-VCA IgG Test Kit with automated equipment other than one of Diamedix's Automated EIA Systems have not been established.
11. Performance characteristics have not been established for diagnosing adolescents with infectious mononucleosis.
12. The linearity of the assay has been determined to be from an Index Value of 1.10 to 3.69.

References

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