

# Chagas Disease Testing Guidelines

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## Before Testing

- Information to collect for consideration before testing:
  - Symptoms (mild acute illness, cardiac disease, gastrointestinal issues, etc.); although, during indeterminate phase the patient may be asymptomatic for years or decades
  - Detailed travel/exposure history, particularly to Mexico, Central America, and South America
- Contact CDC Parasitic Disease Inquiries at 404-718-4745 or [chagas@cdc.gov](mailto:chagas@cdc.gov) for questions regarding diagnostic considerations
- Several commercial labs offer diagnostic testing for Chagas disease (*Trypanosoma cruzi* IgG), and **the CDC should typically only be used for confirmatory testing**
- If sending approved sample to the CDC, complete CDC Form 50.34  
Found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/laboratory/specimen-submission/pdf/form-50-34.pdf>

## Available Tests

### Serology (Antibody Detection, IgG):

- Used for diagnosis of chronic Chagas disease
- A single test is not sufficient for diagnosis – it is recommended to utilize two or more different serologic tests for a more accurate diagnosis
- Acceptable Specimen Type: Serum and Plasma
- CDC Testing Guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/laboratory/specimen-submission/detail.html?CDCTestCode=CDC-10458>

### Molecular Detection (PCR):

- Used for cases of transfusion, transplant, vectorborne, or congenital Chagas infection
- Only appropriate during early or acute phases of infection
- Acceptable Specimen Type: Blood, Heart Biopsy Tissue, and CSF
- CDC Testing Guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/laboratory/specimen-submission/detail.html?CDCTestCode=CDC-10475>

## Other Resources

- CDC Chagas General Info: <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/>
- CDC Resources for Health Professionals:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/health\\_professionals/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/chagas/health_professionals/index.html)
- Information for Positive Blood Donors: <http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/assets/oph/Center-PHCH/Center-CH/infectious-epi/EpiManual/ChagasFlyerCDCTestPositive.pdf>

\*Testing recommendations change periodically, please contact IDEpi for further information or visit the CDC's website