Test Definition: C3
Complement C3, S

Overview

Useful For
Assessing disease activity in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)
Investigating an undetectable total complement (CH50) level

Method Name
Nephelometry

NY State Available
Yes

Specimen

Specimen Type
Serum

Specimen Required

Container/Tube:
Preferred: Serum gel
Acceptable: Red top

Specimen Volume: 1 mL

Forms
If not ordering electronically, complete, print, and send a Renal Diagnostics Test Request (T830) with the specimen.

Reject Due To

Gross hemolysis  OK
Gross lipemia  Reject
Gross icterus  OK

Specimen Minimum Volume
0.5 mL

Specimen Stability Information

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<th>Specimen Type</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Special Container</th>
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<tr>
<td>Serum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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Clinical & Interpretive
Clinical Information
The complement system is an integral part of the body's immune defenses. The primary complement pathway consists of recognition (C1q, C1r, C1s), activation (C4, C2, C3), and attack (C5, C6, C7, C8, C9) mechanisms with respect to their role in antibody-mediated cytolysis.

The complement system can be activated via immune complexes, and the alternative pathway (properdin pathway), which is activated primarily by foreign bodies such as microorganisms.

C3 activation involves cleavage by C3 convertase into C3a and C3b. When immune complexes are not involved, the alternate method of complement activation initiates the reactant sequence at C3, bypassing C1, C4, and C2.

Severe recurrent bacterial infections occur in patients with homozygous C3 deficiency and in those patients with low levels of C3 secondary to the absence of C3b activator.

Decreased C3 may be associated with acute glomerulonephritis, membranoproliferative glomerulonephritis, immune complex disease, active systemic lupus erythematosus, septic shock, and end-stage liver disease.

Reference Values
75-175 mg/dL

Interpretation
A decrease in C3 levels to the abnormal range is consistent with disease activation in systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).

Cautions
The results are dependent on appropriate specimen transport and storage.

Clinical Reference

Performance

Method Description

PDF Report
No

Specimen Retention Time
14 days

Performing Laboratory Location
Rochester

Fees & Codes
Test Definition: C3
Complement C3, S

Test Classification
This test has been cleared, approved, or is exempt by the US Food and Drug Administration and is used per manufacturer's instructions. Performance characteristics were verified by Mayo Clinic in a manner consistent with CLIA requirements.

CPT Code Information
86160

LOINC® Information

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