Overview

Useful For
Screening for possible disorders of mitochondrial metabolism, when used in conjunction with blood lactate collected at the same time, to determine the lactate-to-pyruvate ratio

Genetics Test Information
The lactate:pyruvate (L:P) ratio is considered a helpful (not diagnostic) tool in the evaluation of patients with possible disorders of mitochondrial metabolism, especially in patients with neurologic dysfunction and either elevated or normal blood lactate levels. Pyruvic acid levels alone have little clinical utility.

Testing Algorithm
See [Epilepsy: Unexplained Refractory and/or Familial Testing Algorithm](#)

Special Instructions
- [Biochemical Genetics Patient Information](#)
- [Epilepsy: Unexplained Refractory and/or Familial Testing Algorithm](#)

Method Name
Spectrophotometry (SP)

NY State Available
Yes

Specimen

Specimen Type
Whole blood

Additional Testing Requirements
This test does not calculate the lactate:pyruvate ratio. To obtain this information, both this test and [LACS1 / Lactate, Plasma](#) must be ordered. The ratio can be calculated from the results obtained from these tests. A separate specimen must be obtained for lactate testing, see [LACS1 / Lactate, Plasma](#).

Specimen Required
Call 800-533-1710 or 507-266-5700 to order special collection tube.

Patient Preparation: Fasting (at least 4 hours)

Supplies: Perchloric Acid-Pyruvate Tube (T012)

Container/Tube: Special collection tube containing 2.5 mL of 6% perchloric acid

Specimen Volume: Exactly 1 mL
Collection Instructions:
1. Special collection tube must be prechilled prior to collection.
2. Draw enough blood directly into syringe to add exactly 1 mL of blood to the prechilled special collection tube.
3. Taking care to not spill any of the preservative, cautiously remove the cap from the tube.
4. Immediately transfer blood, once drawn, to the prechilled, special collection tube, recap, and shake vigorously to mix.

Additional Information:
1. **Check expiration date before using.** Supplied collection tube expires 14 months after preparation.
2. If perchloric acid (preservative) spills, obtain a new, prechilled tube.

Forms
1. [Biochemical Genetics Patient Information](T602)
2. If not ordering electronically, complete, print, and send a [Biochemical Genetics Test Request](T798) with the specimen.

Specimen Minimum Volume
See Specimen Required

Reject Due To

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<tr>
<td>Gross lipemia</td>
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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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<td>Whole blood</td>
<td>Refrigerated (preferred)</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>PYRUVATE</td>
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Clinical & Interpretive

**Clinical Information**

Pyruvic acid, an intermediate metabolite, plays an important role in linking carbohydrate and amino acid metabolism to the tricarboxylic acid cycle, the fatty acid beta-oxidation pathway, and the mitochondrial respiratory chain complex. Though isolated elevated pyruvate is not diagnostic of any inborn error of metabolism, analysis with lactate may suggest an inborn error of metabolism as some present with lactic acidosis or a high lactate-to-pyruvate (L:P) ratio.

The L:P ratio is elevated in several, but not all, mitochondrial respiratory chain disorders. Mitochondrial disorders vary widely in presentation and age of onset. Many mitochondrial disorders have neurologic and myopathic features and may involve multiple organ systems. Determination of lactate, pyruvate, and L:P ratio in cerebrospinal fluid is helpful in directing attention toward a possible mitochondrial disorder in cases with predominantly neurologic dysfunction and normal blood lactate levels, though further confirmatory testing will be required to establish a diagnosis.

A low L:P ratio is observed in inherited disorders of pyruvate metabolism including pyruvate dehydrogenase complex (PDHC) deficiency. Clinical presentation of PDHC deficiency can range from fatal congenital lactic acidosis to relatively mild ataxia or neuropathy. The most common features in infants and children with PDHC deficiency are delayed
Test Definition: PYR
Pyruvic Acid, Blood

Development and hypotonia. Seizures and ataxia are also frequent features. Other manifestations can include congenital brain malformations, degenerative changes including Leigh disease, and facial dysmorphism.

Reference Values
0.08-0.16 mmol/L
NIH Unit
0.7-1.4 mg/dL

Interpretation
An elevated lactate-to-pyruvate (L:P) ratio may indicate inherited disorders of the respiratory chain complex, tricarboxylic acid cycle disorders and pyruvate carboxylase deficiency. Respiratory chain defects usually result in L:P ratios above 20.

A low L:P ratio (disproportionately elevated pyruvic acid) may indicate an inherited disorder of pyruvate metabolism. Defects of the pyruvate dehydrogenase complex result in L:P ratios below 10.

The L:P ratio is characteristically normal in other patients. An artifactually high ratio can be found if the patient is acutely ill.

Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) L:P ratio may assist in evaluation of patients with neurologic dysfunction and normal blood L:P ratios. Blood and CSF specimens should be collected at the same time.

Cautions
Correct specimen collection and handling is crucial to achieve reliable results.

Pyruvic acid levels alone have little clinical utility. Abnormal concentrations of pyruvic acid and lactate-to-pyruvate (L:P) ratios are not diagnostic for a particular disorder but must be interpreted in the context of the patient’s clinical presentation and other laboratory studies. The determination of pyruvic acid is of diagnostic value when lactic acid is measured and the L:P ratio is established in the same specimen.

When comparing blood and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) L:P ratios, blood and CSF specimens should be collected at the same time.

Clinical Reference
Performance

Method Description

PDF Report
No

Day(s) Performed
Monday, Wednesday

Report Available
4 to 8 days

Specimen Retention Time
3 weeks

Performing Laboratory Location
Rochester

Fees & Codes

Fees
- Authorized users can sign in to Test Prices for detailed fee information.
- Clients without access to Test Prices can contact Customer Service 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Prospective clients should contact their Regional Manager. For assistance, contact Customer Service.

Test Classification
This test was developed, and its performance characteristics determined by Mayo Clinic in a manner consistent with CLIA requirements. This test has not been cleared or approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

CPT Code Information
### Test Definition: PYR

**Pyruvic Acid, Blood**

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