

# DETECTION OF VARICELLA ZOSTER VIRUS BY PCR



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Laboratory Medicine

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*The information contained in this flyer is intended for healthcare professionals.*

## INTENT OF USE:

The Aga Khan University Clinical Laboratories is introducing the Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV) DNA Detection Test, for the qualitative identification of VZV from vesicular or pustular lesions of the skin and mucous membranes in human samples. This test plays a critical role in confirming VZV infections and differentiating them from other clinically similar rash-causing illnesses. Early and accurate detection supports timely clinical decision-making, including appropriate isolation measures and treatment, thereby helping to prevent disease transmission and improve patient outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION:

Varicella-zoster virus (VZV), a member of the herpesvirus family, causes varicella (chicken pox) which is a highly contagious disease. Only one serotype of VZV is known, and humans are the only reservoir. Following infection, the virus remains latent in neural ganglia and in about 10-20% of cases it reactivates to cause herpes zoster, or shingles, generally in persons over 50 years of age or immunocompromised individuals. VZV transmission occurs via droplets, aerosols, or direct contact with respiratory secretions, and almost always produces clinical disease in susceptible individuals. While mostly a mild disorder in childhood, varicella tends to be more severe in adults. It may be fatal, especially in neonates and in immunocompromised persons. In temperate climates most cases occur before the age of 10 years. Varicella is characterized by an itchy, rash usually starting on the scalp and face and initially accompanied by fever and malaise. The rash gradually spreads to the trunk and extremities. The vesicles gradually dry out, and crusts appear, which then disappear over a period of one to two weeks. Shingles is a painful rash that may occasionally result in permanent damage to the nerves. It is relatively common in HIV-infected persons, sometimes with fatal consequences.

## CLINICAL UTILITY

This test detects the Varicella Zoster Virus in the vesicular fluids or pustular lesions from human specimens.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION :

Test results should be interpreted in context of clinical findings, history and other laboratory data. Erroneous test results might occur from improper specimen collection; failure to follow the recommended sample collection, handling, and storage procedures; or the number of organisms in the specimen is too low to be detected by the test.

## PRINCIPLE:

Real Time PCR

## SPECIMEN TYPE:

Sample collected in dry swab from vesicular fluid, maculopapular lesions or scabs from lesions

## CHARGES:

PKR 24,000

\*Revisions may apply

## SCHEDULE:

Test is performed every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and reported the next day.

For more information please call: 021 3486 1620  
or Email: [laboratory@aku.edu](mailto:laboratory@aku.edu)

