



## FOB TESTING AND FAECAL REDUCING SUBSTANCES

### Faecal Occult Blood testing

Following a review by the Community Laboratory Clinical Governance Group, Guaiac faecal occult blood testing (FOBT) is to be discontinued. Faecal immunochemical testing (FIT) will be performed on all samples (FIT is currently performed when FOBT is positive) but is not recommended other than as part of a public screening programme. A feasibility study of FIT screening in New Zealand is currently being performed in Waitemata.

- FIT should not be performed more frequently than 2-yearly or in those under 50 years of age (consistent with the feasibility study)
- Patients with iron deficiency, anaemia, rectal bleeding or other symptoms of gastrointestinal disease should not have FIT, but should be investigated according to the Waikato Hospital Primary Care Management Guidelines. (<http://www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/file/fileid/18567>).
- FIT does not require dietary adjustment and a single specimen is required (not three).
- FIT testing is only indicated in asymptomatic individuals as part of a public screening programme for colorectal cancer.
- A negative result does not exclude colon cancer.
- A positive FIT requires follow-up since approximately 1 in 10 appropriately tested patients with a positive result will have a colon neoplasm.

### Faecal reducing substances

From **1<sup>st</sup> November 2012** this test will no longer be offered. This is due to a combination of ongoing supply problems and questionable clinical value.

Unfortunately the test suffers from significant sensitivity and specificity issues, resulting in more and more laboratories discontinuing the test. This decrease in demand is the likely reason that the manufacturers have stopped producing the reagents.

Faecal reducing substance is often requested in the context of suspected lactose intolerance. For best practice in the diagnosis of lactose intolerance, please refer to the relevant section in the BPAC website, referenced below:

[http://www.bpac.org.nz/resources/bt/2010/03\\_lactose.asp](http://www.bpac.org.nz/resources/bt/2010/03_lactose.asp)

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