
Lab Dept: Anatomic Pathology

Test Name: BRONCHOALVEOLAR LAVAGE CELL COUNT AND DIFFERENTIAL

General Information

Lab Order Codes: Bronchoalveolar Lavage Cell Count

Synonyms: BAL, cell count; Bronch washings, cell count; Bronchial brushing, cell count

CPT Codes: 89050 – Cell count
88108-26 – Smear and interpretation

Test Includes: When ordered, nucleated cell count and manual differential, culture, special stains for microorganisms, other special stains.

Logistics

Test Indications: Useful for differential diagnosis and management of interstitial lung disease, sarcoid, histiocytosis, and hypersensitivity.

Lab Testing Section: Anatomic Pathology and Hematology

Phone Numbers: MIN Lab: 612-813-5875

STP Lab: 651-220-6550

Test Availability: Monday - Friday

Turnaround Time: 1 - 3 days

Special Instructions: N/A

Specimen

Specimen Type: Bronchoalveolar washings

Container: Screw capped, sterile vial

Draw Volume: 40 - 70 mL of bronchoalveolar washings

Processed Volume: Varies depending on orders.

Collection: Maintain sterility and forward promptly at ambient temperature only.

Special Processing: Specify need for counts and stains on the Bronchoalveolar Lavage Form (available from lab)

Patient Preparation: Physician preference

Sample Rejection: Insufficient specimen; mislabeled or unlabeled specimen

Interpretive

Reference Range: Differential Macrophages: 80 - 90%
Lymphocytes: 10%
Nucleated Cell Count: 10 - 15 x 10⁹/100 mL

Critical Values: N/A

Limitations: Wide variability in cell type and numbers are recovered. Standardized volumes and concentrations are not yet established.

Methodology: Light microscopy

Contraindications: Severe hypoxemia with impending respiratory failure.

References: Rosai, Juan MD, Ackerman's Surgical Pathology, 8th ed, vols 1 and 2, CV Mosby

Sternberg, Steven (1997) Histology for Pathologists, 2nd ed, Lippincott/Raven