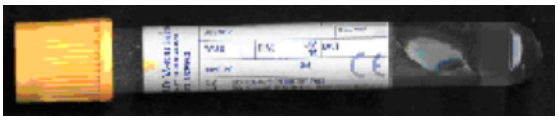
Folate

UKAS MEDICAL 7880 Accredited to ISO 15189:2012

Synonyms	Folic acid
Clinical Indication	Investigation of Macrocytic anaemia. Macrocytosis is a descriptive term for red blood cell size that is larger than the normal range. Megaloblastic anaemia is a form of macrocytic anaemia in which the increased size of RBCs is caused by abnormal cell division in RBC precursors in the bone marrow. Folate deficiency can cause megaloblastic anaemia. Folate deficiency has become increasingly rare in developed countries due to the fortification of many foods with folic acid however may be seen in patients with malabsorption, on folate antagonist therapy and during excessive folate demand (e.g. pregnancy).
Part of Profile / See Also	Haematinics (B12, folate, ferritin)
Request Form	Combined Pathology manual Blood form or ICE request
Availability / Frequency of Analysis	Serum Folate: On request. Minimum retesting interval is 3 months. Red Cell Folate: Refer to Consultant Haematologist
Turnaround Time	Same day
Patient Preparation	None
Sample Requirements	
Specimen Type	Serum
Volume	5 ml
Container	 Yellow top (SST) tube Or  Paediatric lithium heparin (Orange top – Sarstedt tube) Or  Paediatric lithium-heparin (Pale green top – BD Microtainer)
Reference Range & Units	Greater than 2.5 ug/L
Interferences	Haemolysed samples are unsuitable for analysis. Samples delayed reaching the laboratory (>8 hours) are not suitable for folate analysis.
Interpretation & Clinical Decision Value (if applicable)	Results should be treated on a case by case basis and should be assessed in conjunction with patient's medical history, clinical examinations and other findings
References	Up to Date – 'Macrocytosis/Macrocytic Anaemia' and 'Clinical manifestations and diagnosis of vitamin B12 and folate deficiency' – Searched October 2018

	NICE Clinical Knowledge Summary – Anaemia – B12 and folate deficiency – searched October 2018.
Test code	FOL
Lab Handling	Analysed from primary tube and stored at 4°C. Serum folate stable for 3 days at 4C.