

## **Fecal Lactoferrin to Replace Stool White Blood Cell Microscopy**

Beginning April 19, the Methodist Microbiology laboratory will replace stool white blood cell (WBC) microscopy with fecal lactoferrin for the diagnosis of inflammatory diarrhea. Inflammatory diarrhea may be caused by certain infectious (i.e. *Shigella* sp., *Salmonella* sp., *Campylobacter* sp., *Clostridium difficile*), or non-infectious (i.e. ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease) diseases. Previously, the identification of white blood cells in the stool by microscopy was used to determine the presence of an inflammatory component. More recently, the fecal lactoferrin assay was made commercially available. This assay detects a glycoprotein component of neutrophils called lactoferrin, and has improved sensitivity and specificity over microscopy for WBCs.

Lactoferrin is a component of breast milk, therefore this test should not be used to evaluate babies or children receiving breast milk.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Tess Karre, Director of Microbiology (402)354-4762, or Jennifer Krifka MLS(ASCP)<sup>cm</sup>, Service Leader Microbiology/Serology (402)354-3147.