

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON HISTOPATHOLOGY SERVICES IN OUR LABORATORY

1. What is a pathology report?
 - A pathology report is a document issued by a pathology laboratory. In our Histopathology laboratory, all of pathology reports are signed and authorized by Specialists in Pathology registered in Hong Kong, who summarize and interpret the results of their examination of your specimen(s).
2. What is the importance of a pathology report?
 - A pathology report guides your treating doctor in your treatment in many ways. They can give a diagnosis of your disease that you are suffering from. In the field of histopathology and cytopathology, the diagnosis usually relates to the presence or absence of tumour, and if present, whether they are of benign, malignant, or, in some rare situations, of unknown or uncertain malignant potential.
 - For benign diseases apart from benign tumours, pathology reports can indicate whether your tissue shows features of inflammation, and occasionally, with the help of ancillary studies, may suggest potential causative pathogen(s) in some cases related to infection.
 - For malignant diseases, the report will give information on typing of tumour, potential subtypes, and, in excisional specimens, the grading, staging and results that can allow your treating doctors to predict your prognosis of the disease.
3. How are the results related to my treatment?
 - Having a right diagnosis is the key to treatment success. With the current advancement and intricacies in current medical treatment of different diseases, a right diagnosis is a must.
 - The result of a pathology report will give your treating doctor a guide for the further steps you need to go through in treating your disease. For instance, the pathology results may suggest the need to procure further tissue, repeating a test, to take medications, for an operation, further ancillary studies, as well as drug choice.
 - Sometimes, the pathology result may allow your treating doctor to refer you to other services, including to doctors of different specialty, or even to tertiary institutions for further workup and more advanced treatment.
4. How long do I expect my histopathology/cytopathology report to be available?
 - This is quite a difficult question to be answered precisely, as there are many factors in play. For example, a simple biopsy from endoscopy studies can be reported on the earliest the next working day after the receipt of the specimen in our laboratory. Large and complex resection specimens, however, due to their complex nature and requiring gross dissection and tissue sampling by pathologists for histopathology examination, usually take longer for a report to be available. The difficulty on the diagnosis is also an important factor, as pathologists may need to do ancillary studies, sometimes more than 1 round of studies, in order to make a definitive diagnosis.
 - With the advancement and the increasing number and sophistication of ancillary studies required in rendering a diagnosis and tumour classification in the current era of precision medicine, our pathologists may need to send out your specimen

to other institutes for further sophisticated workup that are otherwise not available in our Hospital, these ancillary tests may take weeks to complete.

- In some rare situations, the diagnosis is so difficult that our pathologists would consider seeking second opinions from experts in different histopathology subspecialties. These are usually the most arduous situations in which either the diagnosis is very rare or requiring the judicious use of advanced workup, that sometimes considered the most painstakingly perplexed diagnosis even for an expert in a pathology subspecialty in Hong Kong and, rarely worldwide. These are the cases that we may need to wait for weeks or, unfortunately in a few cases, in months. Nonetheless, during the waiting period, your doctor would be kept informed of the progress, and in most of the time, your doctor would have already contacted us inquiring about the progress of the workup and/or consultation.
- Nevertheless, we are still obliged to provide you and your treating doctor with some rough idea of when to expect a pathology report to be available so that they can plan your follow up schedule to explain to you the pathology result. Therefore, we have one of our quality indicators in hand, namely the turnaround time (TAT), which is the measurement of the number of days required for most of our pathology reports (80% of cases) to be issued after specimen arrival to our laboratory. Therefore, our target TAT for 80% of the pathology reports of the specimens need to be available from their receipt day are listed as follows:

Specimen type	Expected TAT for 80% of case
Simple biopsies	3 working days
Large specimens	5 working days
Cytology specimens	3 working days

Please be aware that the listed number of days are “working days”, therefore, they may be affected due to the presence of Sundays and public holidays in between your operation/procedure day and day when the pathology result is ready. Of course, the factors mentioned above would also influence the time required for a pathology report to be available.

5. How do I know that my pathology report is ready?

- As the pathology report is ready, they will be delivered to your doctor(s) requesting the test. Your doctor will arrange the day of follow-up visit for you to explain the report to you. Depending on the practice by your treating doctor, you may either receive a photocopy of the pathology report or the true copy of the report.
- If your pathology report is ready before your discharge from our hospital, you may be able to get the pathology report together with other documents when you are discharged from the hospital.
- In some cases, our pathologists may call the doctor taking care of you to discuss the report finding, or to give a verbal preliminary report. The latter can either be instructed by your treating doctors or proactively by our pathologists to expedite your treatment process.

6. Why am I asked to pay further before the report is available?
- The pricing rules of the specimens by categories are relatively general and are aimed at covering the pricing for most different kinds of specimens received in different situations and conditions. However, as there may be a need for additional workup tests in making a diagnosis, particularly those that require sending out to other institutes, additional costs would incur. Therefore, there are situations that you may be asked to come back to pay additional fee for the test to proceed. Please be assured that our pathologists will seek agreement from your treating doctor before asking you to pay, which include explanation to him/her the importance to have these additional tests done.
7. Can we contact your laboratory directly for the result?
- Currently in Hong Kong, we are still preferring the pathology reports to be explained by your treating doctor, as he/she would be the best person to interpret the pathology report by incorporating all the other clinical and investigation findings in formulating a final diagnosis and planning a treatment plan best suitable for you. Moreover, you may be experiencing different kinds of unexpected emotions or may have questions when your doctor explains the report finding to you, in which he/she needs to handle during the consultation. Therefore, it is best to have your pathology reports explained by your doctor, either during your in-patient stay or in a follow-up consultation. This measure can also ensure that your personal data will not be easily disclosed to other people who want to get access to your result, regardless of the reason(s), by impersonating you. Only under the specification of your treating doctor that you will be asked to pick up your report by yourself or by your delegated person by hand in our laboratory, with the requirement of the identity checking by our staff before handing the report to you or your delegate (self pick-up report). In these cases, you will only be contacted by the contact number that your treating doctor had provided us with beforehand.
 - Our laboratory is very dedicated in protecting the patients' confidentiality. We strictly adhere to the policy of patient confidentiality of St. Teresa's Hospital. Only under exceptional situations, such as inspection by regulatory bodies for quality assurance purpose, the inspectors may be able to have access to some of the patients' slides and reports which may contain patients' demographics. However, these slides and reports are just for the purpose of the inspection only. The inspectors are also required to comply with the personal data confidentiality policies of their respective regulatory bodies.
 - If you have other enquiries, suggestions or comments on our service, please free feel to contact us by the following means:
 - i) By phone: (+852) 27112120.
 - ii) By email: histopathology@sth.org.hk.
 - iii) By filling the "Enquiry form" after clicking "Contact us" button in our Hospital's website: <https://www.sth.org.hk/>.

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常見問題

1. 什麼是病理學報告？
 - 病理學報告是由病理實驗室發出的文件。在我們的組織病理學實驗室，所有病理學報告都是由香港註冊病理科專科醫生簽發，他們會總結並詮釋您的標本檢查結果。
2. 病理報告的重要性何在？
 - 病理報告可以在許多方面引導您的主診醫生進行治療。在組織病理學和細胞病理學領域，診斷通常與是否存在腫瘤有關，如果存在，則判斷是否為良性、惡性腫瘤，或者在某些情況下，判斷為未知或不確定的惡性腫瘤。
 - 即使是良性疾病，他們也可以指出您的組織是否有發炎的特徵，有時在輔助研究的幫助下，可能會在部份與感染有關的病症上建議可能的致病病原。
 - 對於惡性疾病，報告會提供腫瘤分類的資訊，腫瘤分級、病理分期和對治療選擇上有關的資訊，以便您的主診醫生預測閣下之疾病的預後情況及計劃治療方案。
3. 病理報告上的結果與我的治療有何關聯？
 - 擁有正確的診斷是治療成功的關鍵。隨著目前對不同疾病在治療方法上的進步和複雜性，準確的病理診斷才能讓你能接受最合適的治療。
 - 病理檢查結果將為您的主診醫生提供治療疾病的方向及選擇。舉例來說，病理化驗結果可能會令您的主診醫生建議您需要再次採取組織或作進一步的檢查或測試，開始藥物治療或進行手術，以及治療藥物上的選擇。
 - 有時，病理檢查的結果可能會讓您的主診醫生為您進行轉介，例如轉介到其他專科的醫生，甚至是更專門的醫療機構以進行進一步的檢查和接受更先進的治療。
4. 組織病理學/細胞病理學報告預計多久可以拿到？
 - 這是個很難精確回答的問題，因為內含很多不同多因素。例如內視鏡檢查取出的一般活檢，最快可在化驗室收到標本後的下一個工作天完成報告。另一方面，大型及複雜的切除標本由於其處理步比較複雜，包括需要病理學醫生進行剖切取樣，所以通常需要較長時間才能完成報告。再者，診斷的難度也是一個重要因素。因為病理科醫生可能需要進行其他輔助檢查，有時甚至需要進行超過不止一輪的檢查測試後才能做出最後的診斷。
 - 隨著對腫瘤分類所需的輔助測試在數量和複雜性上的增長及要求，我們的病理科醫生可能需要將標本送往其他化驗機構進行一些在我們後內未可提供的測試檢查，這些輔助檢查可能需要數週才能完成。
 - 在少數情況下，由於個案的診斷非常困難，我們的病理學家可能會尋求在組織病理學不同領域專家的專業意見。這些通常是最艱難的情況，例如甚為罕見的病例，或需要由專家選擇採用較先進的檢查方法以作診斷。這些病例的診斷有時甚至令香港或甚至全球的病理專家也感覺

困難，這些病例可能需要等待數週，在極罕有的情況下可能甚至需要等待數月才能有診斷結果。可幸的是這些個案在我們的日常工作經驗上只屬非常少部份的個案。

- 儘管如此，我們仍有需要讓您及和您的醫生對何時可以拿到病理報告有一個粗略的概念，以便他們計劃您的覆診時間表，向您解釋病理報告結果。因此，我們有一個品質指標在手，那就是「檢驗報告時間目標」(targeted TAT)，也就是衡量大部分（我們定為 80%）的病理標本由送達化驗室後至完成報告所需的平均日數。我們對不同種類的標本有以下的服務承諾：

標本類型	80%檢驗報告完成時間目標
一般活檢	3 個工作天
大型標本	5 個工作天
細胞學標本	3 個工作天

* 請注意，所列日數為「工作天」。所以若在手術/程序時間和與病理報告完成中間有週日及公眾假期的話，實際報告完成的時間會因此而加長。報告完成的時間也會受其他在上文提到的其他因素以致等候報告的時間延長。

5. 我如何知道我的報告已經準備好？

- 當病理報告準備好時，我們會將報告交給您的主診醫生。您的醫生會為您安排覆診時間向您解釋報告內容。根據不同醫生的習慣，您可能會收到病理報告的影印本或報告的真實副本。
- 如果你的報告能在出院前完成，您可能在出院時從醫院的出院文件中收到報告。
- 在某些情況下，我們的病理學家可能會致電您的主診醫生討論報告結果，或提供口頭初步報告，後者可能是由您的主診醫生要求，或由我們的病理學醫生主動提供，以加速你的治療。

6. 為何我在報告還未有之先再被要求支付費用？

- 我們的標本分類的定價規則相對籠統，目的只是要涵蓋大多數不同種類標本的基本費用。然而，由於在診斷的過程中可能需要額外的測試，特別是那些在我們醫院內未能提供而需轉介到其他較專門的化驗室進行的測試，這會產生收取額外化驗費用的需要。因此，在這種情況下，您可能會在報告未完成前被要求回來支付額外的檢驗費用。不過請您放心：我們的病理科醫生會先向您的主診醫生解釋進行這些額外測試的重要性，再在得到您的主診醫生同意後才通知您回來支付額外的化驗費用。

7. 我們可以直接以電話聯絡您們的化驗室索取結果嗎？
- 目前在香港，我們仍然傾向由您的主診醫生解釋病理學報告，因為他/她是詮釋病理學報告的最佳人選，尤其是在結合所有其他臨床和檢查結果後為您作出最後診斷及制定最佳方案。再者，病人在知道報告的結果後可能會出現不同的情緒反應或疑問。這些情緒反應及疑問亦是主診醫生需要在覆診時間內處理的重要部分。因此，您只需等待醫生在覆診時或在住院期間解釋報告。我們這項措施也可確保您的個人資料不會隨便向因各種原因而冒充閣下身份的人洩露。我們只會在您的主診醫生要求下經您的主診醫生向我們提供的聯絡方法通知您可以由自己或由您的授權人來化驗室取得報告。而我們亦只會在能核實您或授權人的身份後才進行報告交收（自取報告）。
 - 我們的化驗室非常重視保護病人的私隱。我們嚴格遵守聖德肋撒醫院的病人私隱保密政策。只有在特殊情況下，例如監管機構在進行品質保證審查時，監管機構的審查人員才有可能接觸到部分患者的切片和報告，其中可能包含患者的個人資料。監管機構的審查人員也必須嚴格遵守其所屬機構在處理個人私隱資料的保密政策。
 - 如果您有任何其他查詢，建議或意見，可以透過以下方式與我們聯絡：
 - i) 電話：(+852) 27112120。
 - ii) 電子郵件：histopathology@sth.org.hk。
 - iii) 點選本醫院網站上的「聯絡我們」按鈕後，填寫「查詢表」：
<https://www.sth.org.hk/>。

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