

## ***FAST FACTS: Herpes Simplex Serologies***

### **HSV IgM**

- Appears 3–10 days after infection
- Persists for 6–8 weeks.
- During reactivations, 5–30% of patients will produce a low-level IgM response.
- IgM is not useful for separating primary from recurrent HSV infections in patients with HSV IgG.
- Many individuals have a low-level IgM response that cannot be correlated with HSV disease.
- Type-specific IgM testing is useless because HSV IgM cross-reacts with HSV-1 and HSV-2.

### **Neonatal IgM Testing**

- HSV IgM can be helpful in diagnosing neonatal infections.
- IgM is usually present 3–4 weeks after birth and persists for up to 1 year.

### **Type Specific HSV IgG antibodies**

- Type-specific HSV IgG may not be detectable for 12–16 weeks after exposure.
- In contrast with traditional (non-type specific) HSV IgG tests where antibody reactivity persists for the patient’s lifetime, some patients appear to lose type-specific HSV IgG antibodies over time. (Antibody reactivity to the peptide antigens can wane.)
- Some patients do not produce antibodies to the peptides used in the type-specific HSV IgG tests and testing with the older cross-reactive methodologies may be required.