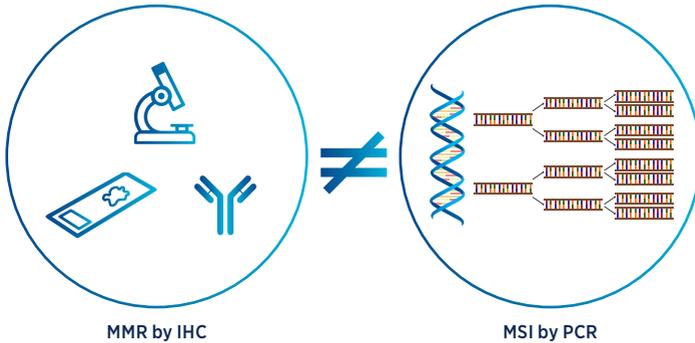


MSI TESTING IHC STAINING VERSUS MOLECULAR PCR TESTING



THINK IDYLLA™
BECAUSE TIME MATTERS

IHC STAINING VERSUS MOLECULAR PCR TESTING



MSI testing by PCR and MMR assessment by IHC provide fundamentally different insights into tumor samples.

Immunohistochemistry (IHC) evaluates the presence or absence of mismatch repair (MMR) protein expression; however, detectable protein expression does not necessarily indicate intact MMR function. Approximately 5–10% of tumors with impaired MMR function retain MMR protein expression, potentially leading to false-negative dMMR results.

Microsatellite instability (MSI) testing by PCR detects DNA changes caused by defective mismatch repair. Unlike IHC, MSI provides a functional assessment of MMR activity, identifying deficiencies even when the proteins stain positive but are non-functional.¹

MSI TESTING IS RECOMMENDED FOR VARIOUS APPLICATIONS

GUIDELINES ON MSI TESTING FOR LYNCH

In international guidelines **both MMR by IHC and/or MSI by PCR are recommended** methods for pre-screening.²

The **decision** about which screening method to be used depends primarily on the **availability of resources** and **expertise of the lab**.

ESMO RECOMMENDATION FOR CO-TESTING IN METASTATIC COLORECTAL CANCER FOR IMMUNOTHERAPY INDICATION

ESMO recommends combining both tests to assess the eligibility to treatment with immune checkpoint inhibitors of mCRC and other cancers of the lynch syndrome spectrum.^{3,4}

IHC LACKS STANDARDIZATION WITH POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

IHC REPORTING CHALLENGES

- Subjective interpretation^{5,6}
- Molecular confirmation needed for equivocal cases
- No consensus on staining cut-off⁷ criteria
- MMR gene mutations may result in impaired functional activity without absence of MMR protein staining⁸

IHC WORKFLOW CHALLENGES

- Wide variability of antibody performance⁹

Proportion of sufficient results for PMS2 in the four NordiQC runs performed¹⁰



Proportion of sufficient results for MLH1 in the six NordiQC runs performed¹¹



Proportion of sufficient results for MSH2 in the five NordiQC runs performed¹²



Proportion of sufficient results for MSH6 in the five NordiQC runs performed¹³



- The recommendation to use four MMR antibodies is not yet widely adopted
- Wide variation in protocol parameters (e.g., antibody dilution and incubation times)
- The use of less sensitive detection systems¹²

IDYLLA™ MSI TEST ENSURES OPTIMAL DIAGNOSTIC RESULTS

Standardized, fully automated Idylla™ MSI testing overcomes the barriers of traditional PCR and IHC testing.

Features	IHC	Traditional PCR*	Idylla™ MSI
Identification of defective protein	✓	-	-
Detection of genomic instability	-	✓	✓
Results within 2.5 hours	✓	-	✓
Limited hands-on time	-	-	✓
No batching needed	✓	-	✓
MSI testing in any laboratory setting	✓	-	✓
Standardized	-	-	✓
IVD from tissue to result	-	-	✓
IVDR-compliant (CDx)	✓	-	✓
Only 1 FFPE tissue section needed**	-	-	✓
No need for paired normal tissue sample	✓	-	✓
No need for external controls	-	-	✓
Fully automated sample-to-result	-	-	✓
Contamination control	-	-	✓
Objective result interpretation	-	-	✓

*PCR-based fragment-sizing test

**≥20% neoplastic cells and more than 25 mm² 10 μm tissue area



REFERENCES

- (1) Funkhouser, W. K. et al. (2012). Relevance, pathogenesis, and testing algorithm for mismatch repair-defective colorectal carcinomas: a report of the association for molecular pathology. *The Journal of molecular diagnostics : JMD*, 14(2), 91-103. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmoldx.2011.11.001>
- (2) Stjepanovic, N. et al. (2019). Hereditary gastrointestinal cancers: ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up[†]. *Annals of oncology: official journal of the European Society for Medical Oncology*, 30(10), 1558-1571. <https://doi.org/10.1093/annonc/mdz233>
- (3) Luchini, C. (2019). ESMO recommendations on microsatellite instability testing for immunotherapy in cancer, and its relationship with PD-1/PD-L1 expression and tumour mutational burden: a systematic review-based approach. *Annals of oncology: official journal of the European Society for Medical Oncology*, 30(8), 1232-1243. <https://doi.org/10.1093/annonc/mdz116>
- (4) Cohen, R. et al. (2019). Association of Primary Resistance to Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors in Metastatic Colorectal Cancer With Misdiagnosis of Microsatellite Instability or Mismatch Repair Deficiency Status. *JAMA oncology*, 5(4), 551-555. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoncol.2018.4942>
- (5) André, T. et al. (2024). Nivolumab plus Ipilimumab in Microsatellite-Instability-High Metastatic Colorectal Cancer. *The New England journal of medicine*, 391(21), 2014-2026. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2402141>
- (6) André, T. et al. (2025). Nivolumab plus ipilimumab versus nivolumab in microsatellite instability-high metastatic colorectal cancer (CheckMate 8HW): a randomised, open-label, phase 3 trial. *The Lancet*, 405(10476), 383-395. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)02848-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)02848-4)
- (7) Li, X. et al. (2023). Heterogeneous expression of mismatch repair proteins and interpretation of immunohistochemical results in colorectal cancer and endometrial cancer. *Pathology, research and practice*, 248, 154647. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.prp.2023.154647>
- (8) McCarthy, A. J. et al. (2019). Heterogenous loss of mismatch repair (MMR) protein expression: a challenge for immunohistochemical interpretation and microsatellite instability (MSI) evaluation. *The journal of pathology. Clinical research*, 5(2), 115-129. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cjp2.120>
- (9) NordiQC Assessment Run 52 2018 Mismatch Repair Protein MSH6: https://www.nordiqc.org/downloads/assessments/101_83.pdf
- (10) NordiQC Assessment Run 71 2024 - Mismatch Repair Protein PMS2 (PMS2): https://www.nordiqc.org/downloads/assessments/188_84.pdf
- (11) NordiQC Assessment Run 67 2023 - Mismatch Repair Protein MLH1 (MLH1): https://www.nordiqc.org/downloads/assessments/171_81.pdf
- (12) NordiQC Assessment Run 68 2023 - Mismatch Repair Protein MSH2 (MSH2): https://www.nordiqc.org/downloads/assessments/172_82.pdf
- (13) NordiQC Assessment Run 72 2024 - Mismatch Repair Protein MSH6 (MSH6): https://www.nordiqc.org/downloads/assessments/189_83.pdf

Biocartis NV
Generaal De Wittelaan 11B
2800 Mechelen - Belgium
+32 15 632 888

Follow us on   
www.biocartis.com
customerservice@biocartis.com



Idylla™ CDx MSI Test (A0220/6) is CE-marked in Europe in compliance with the EU IVD Regulation 2017/746 (IVDR). Idylla™ MSI Test (A0100/6) is CE-marked in Europe in compliance with the EU IVD Directive 98/79/EC. Idylla™ Platform is CE-marked in Europe in compliance with EU IVD Regulation 2017/746 and registered in many other countries. Biocartis and Idylla™ are registered trademarks in Europe, the US and many other countries. The Biocartis and Idylla™ trademarks and logos are used trademarks owned by Biocartis NV. Idylla™ is available for sale in Europe, the US and many other countries. Please check availability with a Biocartis representative. © January 2026, Biocartis NV. All rights reserved.