

VITAL-EQA PROGRAM

External Quality Assurance
for Nutritional Biomarkers



For more information, contact:

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established the VITAL-EQA program in 2003 to strengthen the capacity of nutrition laboratories globally. The program helps public health laboratories maintain and improve the quality of their measurements for biochemical indicators, including various fat- and water-soluble vitamins, and iron-status indicators.

VITAL-EQA is managed by the Global Micronutrient Laboratory which, along with many other CDC programs, supports the International Micronutrient Malnutrition Prevention and Control (IMMPaCt) program. IMMPaCt is dedicated to the elimination of micronutrient malnutrition worldwide.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

WHAT IS THE VITAL-EQA PROGRAM?

VITAL-EQA is an external quality assurance (EQA) program designed to provide public health nutrition laboratories an independent assessment of their analytical performance. Accurate and precise laboratory measurement of nutritional indicators is essential. This measurement is used to direct government policy for supplementation, food fortification, and other nutritional interventions.

The information laboratories receive from VITAL-EQA can be used to:

- Eliminate bias or precision problems in laboratory measurement techniques, and
- Confirm the quality of analysis, and increase the confidence level of the laboratory.

The VITAL-EQA program is designed for public health laboratories in developing countries that may not have the means to participate in fee-based EQA programs. VITAL-EQA is offered free of charge, and participation is voluntary.

VITAL-EQA results are not used for laboratory accreditation or certification.

HOW DO I ENROLL IN THE VITAL-EQA PROGRAM?

To enroll in the program, please send an email to vitaminalab@cdc.gov expressing your interest. An enrollment form will be sent to you to complete and email back.

When are the samples shipped to participating laboratories?

Serum samples are shipped twice a year (April and October). Each shipment includes three serum samples. Each of these samples should be run in duplicate over a period of three consecutive days. Participating laboratories must be able to receive frozen samples packed in dry ice, retrieve samples from customs at the airport, and be responsible for any costs required by customs. Laboratories must also commit to completing sample analyses, and providing results within a specified timeline (about 6 weeks).

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE GLOBAL MICRONUTRIENT LABORATORY PROGRAM

Through its embedded programs, like VITAL-EQA, CDC's Global Micronutrient Laboratory Program applies state-of-the-art laboratory science to help eliminate micronutrient malnutrition worldwide.

The program works to:

- Build laboratory capacity through technical support, training, and technology transfer for epidemiologic studies, health surveys, and evaluations of nutrition interventions.
- Support the development of low-technology methods and field-friendly technologies for assessing nutritional status.
- Assess how low-technology methods compare to reference methods and materials.
- Provide external quality assessment programs for nutritional biomarkers.

