

New diagnostic test developed for meningitis

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Irish scientists have come up with a test that can identify potential cases of meningitis in a fraction of the current time.

Standard tests for meningococcal disease which can lead to meningitis and blood poisoning can take up to 48 hours for results to come back.

But a new diagnostic tool created by experts at Queen's University Belfast and The Belfast Trust can provide results within an hour.

The test could prevent children with meningococcal disease being wrongly sent home, potentially saving dozens of lives every year.

The new diagnostic test known as Loop Mediated Isothermal Amplification (Lamp) has been assessed in a two-year study alongside the standard National Health Service tests.

Researchers said the Lamp diagnostic tool proved to be as efficient as the standard test in returning accurate diagnosis.

A new study at Queen's University is being led in collaboration with the Paediatric Emergency Research UK and Ireland to assess the practicality of testing being undertaken by a clinician in a hospital environment.