

Question 26 – Week of June 4

What is the best test to diagnose pellegra?

- A. Urinary xanthurenic acid after an iron load
- B. Serum pyridoxine
- C. Serum niacin
- D. Urinary excretion of N-methyl nicotinamide and 2-pyridone
- E. Serum biotin

Answer: D

Pellegra is niacin deficiency and presents with diarrhea, dementia, and dermatitis classically. Serum levels of niacin are not reliable. N-methyl nicotinamide and 2-pyridone are metabolites of niacin and are the best way to assess for deficiency. Urinary xanthurenic acid assesses vitamin B6 deficiency (pyridoxine).

Reference:

Mason JB. Nutritional Assessment and Management of the Malnourished Patient. In: Feldman M, LS Friedman, and L.J. Brandt, eds, Sleisenger and Fordtran's Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease: Pathology/Diagnosis/Management, 8th edition. Philadelphia: B. Saunders.2006.