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National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center Testing and Reporting Policies

As a part of our surveillance efforts for CJD, the National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center (NPDPS) conducts four different tests on the biopsy and autopsy samples we receive:

- Western blot: This test demonstrates the presence of the abnormal prion protein, which is believed to cause CJD and other prion diseases. If the abnormal protein is present, the case is positive. The Western blot is the most sensitive test for prion disease. This test is performed on frozen tissue.
- x Immunohistochemistry (IHC)/Histology: In these tests, the neuropathologist examines slides of specially prepared brain tissue to see where the abnormal prion protein appears in order to help determine the type of prion disease. Different types of CJD have different distribution patterns of the abnormal protein. These tests are performed on fixed tissue.
- x Genetic analysis