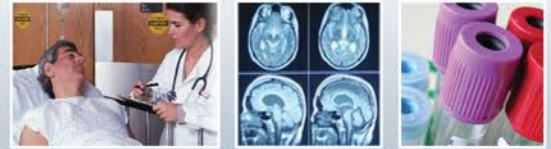




Clinical Practice Change Alert



Ordering of Testing for Toxic Alcohols, March 16, 2016

Date Effective: March 16, 2016

Background Information:

Toxic Alcohol Testing is synonymous with requests to do testing of a patient's serum/plasma for methanol and ethylene glycol.

Currently there is no orderable testing called "toxic alcohols". Instead, there are two separate tests called "ethylene glycol" and "alcohol screen".

The test "ethylene glycol" will analyze for ethylene glycol in addition to propylene glycol.

The test "alcohol screen" will analyze for methanol, ethanol, propanol and acetone.

Change in Procedure:

As both of ethylene glycol and alcohol screen tests are often necessary to rule-out toxic alcohol exposure, **it is the policy of the laboratory to perform "alcohol screen" and "ethylene glycol" testing regardless of which of these tests were specifically requested.**

A test will not be cancelled unless it has been agreed upon with the ordering physician.

Once either a toxic alcohol (methanol or isopropanol) or a glycol (ethylene or propylene) exposure has been determined, **it is reasonable going forward to only monitor for the analytes found to be present unless specifically requested by the ordering physician.**

While not a strict requirement, it would also be the expectation of the laboratory that **monitoring would occur every 4 - 6 hours once fomepizole has been administered and/or dialysis has begun for a confirmed toxic alcohol poisoned patient.**

Patient Impact:

Change in laboratory practice will reduce likelihood of missed diagnosis of toxic alcohol (methanol or ethylene glycol for example) exposure.

More information:

<https://apps.sbgm.mb.ca/labmanual/test/view?seedId=1416>

<https://apps.sbgm.mb.ca/labmanual/test/view?seedId=1345>

DSM Contact Information:

Curtis Oleschuk, PhD, FCACB, Clinical Biochemist, 204-235-3745, coleschuk@dsmanitoba.ca

- 1 -