

October 16, 2020

CLINICAL MICROBIOLOGY

Phase II – Temporary Changes in the Test Menu Available at HSC, SBH, and Westman Clinical Microbiology Laboratories to Accommodate Increased COVID-19 NAAT Testing

Date effective: October 19, 2020

Background Information

Shared Health Clinical Microbiology Laboratories at the Health Sciences Centre (HSC), St. Boniface Hospital (SBH), and Westman Laboratory have been mandated to further increase nucleic acid amplification testing (NAAT) for SARS CoV-2 (COVID-19) for patients at their sites as well as referral hospital sites. To accommodate this testing with a static labour force, additional clinical microbiology laboratory tests will be temporarily suspended while demands for COVID-19 NAAT remain high.

Change in Test Procedure

The following have been added to the list of temporarily suspended clinical microbiology tests:

- Anaerobic bacterial cultures (exceptions: blood cultures, sterile site cultures)
- Mycology (yeast and mould) cultures (exceptions: cultures of tissues from immunocompromised patients, respiratory cultures). *Candida* will continue to be reported where clinically appropriate.
- Sputum culture (exceptions: CF patients, ETT secretions from ICU patients)
- Throat swabs

Phase I list of clinical microbiology tests that were previously suspended (October 2, 2020 memo):

- Bacterial vaginosis (BV) Gram stain assessments
- Breast milk cultures
- Dermatophyte cultures
- Ear (external) and eye (routine) cultures
- Genital swab cultures – including cultures for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*
- *Legionella* cultures
- Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) testing
- Stool cultures
- *Trichomonas* testing – vaginal swabs
- Urine culture for outpatient reproductive age (18-45 years) women with typical symptoms of acute cystitis (uncomplicated infection) – samples from pregnant women will continue to be processed
- Ward screens for MRSA and CPOs (carbapenemase-producing organisms) – admission screens will continue to be accepted

Patient Impact

- Contact the appropriate Clinical Microbiology Laboratory if individual patient culture or testing is critical.

Contact Information

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