Laboratory News

Monthly updates and information from Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory

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Please email Laboratory Services with any questions or concerns or to receive this newsletter via email.

Laboratory Call Center & Specimen Pick Up: 616.774.7721

Pricing Hotline: 616.774.7595

Helpful Links
Add-on Test Request
Forms and Requisitions
Laboratory Locations
Lockbox Instructions
Supply Requisition
Test Catalog

Compliance

Patient Safety: Quality Specimens = Quality Results

From collection to transport, Spectrum Health Laboratories expect quality specimens. A quality specimen is one that has been collected and transported, keeping specimen integrity and patient identification intact.

Collection

Please visit spectrumhealth.testcatalog.org for complete specimen collection instructions, always double check the catalog prior to collecting a specimen.

Labeling and Orders

Due to the large volume and wide variety of specimens received by Spectrum Health Laboratory, identification is extremely important to prevent possible errors in treatment. Proper labeling and correct orders also decreases time spent in order to investigate and discover the missing information. All specimens should be labeled immediately after collection with two patient identifiers.

Labels should always include:
- Patient’s First and Last Name (no initials)
- Patient’s Date of Birth
- Date and Time of Collection
- Collector’s Initials
- For Non-blood Specimens: Type and/or Description (i.e. Urine, CSF, Pleural, left or right, etc.)

Orders should always include:
- Patient’s Information (Full name, date of birth, address and phone number)
- Diagnosis (valid ICD-10 code or signs and symptoms)
- Patient’s Insurance Information
- Ordering Provider’s Information (Clinician’s full name, address, phone and fax)
- Pertinent Clinical Information

The quality of results is dependent on accuracy of specimen collection and labeling. If identification information is not complete, is inaccurate, or the specimen is improperly labeled or collected, Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory reserves the right to reject the specimen and require recollection.

NOTE: If two patient identifiers are not used on the specimen, the specimen will be rejected, the order will be cancelled and a request for recollection will be made. This includes Cytology (i.e. Pap) specimens. This is a Joint Commission National Patient Safety Goal for 2015. (NSPG.01.01.01: “Use at least two patient identifiers when providing care, treatment or services.”)

(Continues on page 2)
Compliance – Patient Safety (continued from page 1)

Transport

Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory provides plastic, color-coded, biohazard bags for transporting specimens. Using the correct bag ensures that specimens arrive at the correct temperature for testing and processing.

- Ambient temperature specimens should be placed in a white bag.
- Refrigerated specimens should be placed in a green bag.
- Frozen specimens should be placed in a blue bag.
- STAT specimens (that which require immediate laboratory results) should be placed in a red bag.
- Priority bags are purple and are for specimens that need to be handled and processed immediately to maintain integrity (such as specimens that need to be spun).

Remember when placing specimens in transport bags:

- All blood specimens from a single patient should be placed in one bag.
- Urine or body fluids should be bagged separately. Large glass bottles of fluid should also be bagged.
- Two patients’ samples should never be combined in one bag.
- Always make sure lids to containers are on correctly and tight to avoid leaky specimens.
- Never send syringes with needles attached.
- Paper Orders, extra labels or eSHare/Epic slips should be placed in the pouch on the outside of the bag.

Chemistry Department News

Reducing Substances, Urine Test Being Discontinued

Effective December 15, 2015, the Spectrum Health Laboratories will no longer perform the Reducing Substances, Urine test. The Clinitest reagent tablets used for this test are being discontinued by their manufacturer.

Urinalysis specimens from patients under 2 years old have long been reflexed to the Reducing Substances test to screen for metabolic disorders involving excretion of carbohydrates other than glucose. Because of the discontinuation of the Clinitest reagent, this testing will no longer be able to be performed. Reducing Substances, Urine will also be discontinued as a separate orderable test.

The Carbohydrates, Urine test available through Mayo Medical Laboratories is recommended for further evaluation of patients where excretion of non-glucose carbohydrates is clinically suspected. It should be noted that a Galactosemia screen is included in the neonatal screening panel sent to the Michigan Department of Community Health on all newborn infants.

Cytology Department News

ThinPrep® PAP Test and Lubricating Jelly

The only lubricating gel to be used with the ThinPrep® PAP test are the Aseptic Control PAP Test Lubricating Jelly and Surgilube®. Other lubricants interfere with the accurate reading of the PAP test. These lubricants may contain caromers or polymers, which may result in clumping of cells and clogging of the instrument.

Hologic®, the manufacturer of the ThinPrep® PAP, recommends lukewarm water. Only if needed, use lubricant sparingly. Lubricant should be applied to the exterior sides of the speculum only, avoiding the tip. Please refer to link: Letter from the Manufacturer.

New centralized laboratory orders fax line: One Fax (616) 774-7696

Any laboratory testing order can be faxed to (616) 774-7696 and that order will be accessible from any Spectrum Laboratory Draw Site in the Grand Rapids, Big Rapids and Gerber (Fremont) area.
Hematology Department News

New Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR) method
On November 30, 2015, the Spectrum Health Laboratory began performing Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (Sed Rate, ESR) testing on a new Alcor iSED instrument. This instrument is much safer for laboratory staff to use than the present ESR Stat Plus method, and also has the advantage that it can be interfaced to our computer systems for automated result reporting instead of having to enter results manually.

The Alcor iSED uses a rheology testing method, which is different than the gravitational sedimentation used in the ESR Stat Plus and the traditional Westergren method. Evaluation studies have shown the iSED results to generally correlate with the other methods, but with isolated differences in some individual patients. ESR testing is a very imperfect area, and even the traditionally "gold standard" Westergren method has limitations as to its accuracy. If the ESR test is being used to monitor a patient on an ongoing basis, it is recommended to "re-baseline" the patient by sending a new specimen for the ESR test at a time the patient is asymptomatic or at a stable level of symptoms.

The reference ranges for the ESR test will not change with the new method. Any questions concerning this change in ESR testing method may be directed to Dr. Jenifer Stumph in the Pathology department at (616) 267-2660.

Hemostasis Department News

Laboratory Testing for Heparin Induced Thrombocytopenia (HIT) (Part II)
The following additional changes in Heparin Induced Thrombocytopenia (HIT) testing, since the previous article on this subject in the June 2015 newsletter, have been made or will be made in the near future:

1. Positive or Borderline Heparin Dependent Antibody (HDA) results will now automatically reflex to the Serotonin Release Assay (SRA). An additional order is no longer required for this test in patients with such results. The SRA remains an orderable test without needing to order the HDA first, and may be the appropriate initial test to order in ECMO or other circulatory assist patients where the Heparin Dependent Antibody test may be unreliable.

2. A link to a new document with the 4T Score table and an updated management and test ordering algorithm has been added to the online laboratory catalog listings for the Heparin Dependent Antibody and Serotonin Release Assay tests. Click on this link to see this document. This document should be consulted as needed to evaluate whether Heparin Dependent Antibody testing is appropriate and what clinical actions should be taken before and after test results are available. The interpretive comments reported with Heparin Dependent Antibody test results have been updated to reference this document. In the future a link to this document will be added to appear in the Order Entry function when the Heparin Dependent Antibody test is ordered.

3. It is no longer considered necessary for patients to be off heparin for at least 24 hours before the Heparin Dependent Antibody test is ordered. The test reagent manufacturer states that heparin levels up to 2.5 U/mL do not interfere with this assay. However, the theoretical possibility that lower heparin levels could dissociate heparin-PF4 complexes and produce aberrant test results cannot be completely excluded.

Any questions concerning Heparin Dependent Antibody or Serotonin Release Assay testing for heparin induced thrombocytopenia may be directed to Christina Kleibusch in the Hemostasis laboratory at (616) 267-2740 or to Christopher (CJ) Michaud in the Pharmacy department at (616) 391-2043.

Flu season is coming! Make sure you know how to collect these specimens:
How to collect: Nasopharyngeal Collection
How to collect: Throat Swab Collection
How to collect: eSwab Collection
How to collect: UTM Viral Media
How to collect: Microbiology Quick Guide
Toxicology Department News

Changes in Methodology
Effective December 7, 2015, Spectrum Health Laboratory will be updating the methodology for the test Expanded Benzodiazepines Confirmation, Urine.

The change in methodology takes testing from a Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) platform to Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS). This test will now utilize new lower cutoff levels of 50 ng/mL for each benzodiazepine targeted in the analysis, instead of the current cutoff which are set at 300 ng/mL. The lowering of these cutoffs comes from a need for patient compliance determination in pain management. A result for any benzodiazepine above the cutoff will be reported as positive. In addition to oxazepam, lorazepam and alprazolam metabolites, which were part of the original panel, this newly adopted method will now include nordiazepam, temazepam and clonazepam metabolites.

As a reminder, urine that tests positive for benzodiazepines requires confirmation testing to eliminate the possibility of a false positive and determines which benzodiazepine(s) may be present. Again the order name and test code will not change.

Any questions concerning toxicology testing may be directed to Ben Kuslikis, PhD in the Toxicology Laboratory at (616) 267-2784.

General Announcements

Outpatient Laboratory Holiday Hours
In observance of the upcoming holidays, Outpatient Laboratories (Draw Sites) schedules will be adjusted as follows:

December:
LIMITED HOURS: Thursday, December 24, 2015 (7am – Noon)
CLOSED: Friday, December 25, 2015
OPEN: Saturday, December 26, 2015 (regular scheduled hours)

January:
CLOSED: Friday, January 1, 2016
OPEN: Saturday, January 2, 2016 (regular scheduled hours)

For information regarding laboratory locations, hours and phone numbers please visit Laboratory Locations on the SpectrumHealth.org site.

Referrals/Send Out Testing Holiday Hours
Due to the fact that many reference laboratories may have reduced hours during the holiday season, we recommend that you do not draw any time sensitive specimens (i.e TB T-spot, Immuknow, or Lymphocyte Mitogens) after Tuesday, December 22nd at noon and Tuesday, December 29th at noon without contacting Spectrum Health Laboratory first.

To ensure specimen integrity please contact either the Spectrum Health Call Center (616.774.7721) or Spectrum Health Referrals Department (616.267.2753) during this timeframe. Thank you.
One of the real joys of the Holiday Season is the opportunity to say

Thank You!

Wishing you peace, joy and good health in the New Year!

Sincerely,

Spectrum Health Laboratory