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HELP US HELP YOU

Winter weather courier reminders

As our temperatures drop and winter approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to share a few reminders of things that may affect your specimen transport and testing.

Winter weather courier services

Our couriers will do everything in their power to perform each scheduled pick up as close to on time as possible. Please be aware that, for the safety of our drivers, road conditions may cause them to be delayed.

If the Department of Transportation closes roads, or if a route is deemed hazardous to a driver, they will be pulled from their routes. Although our primary goal is care of our patients, we need to balance this with the safety of the couriers. We will attempt to notify each client that is affected due to a courier delay or cancellation as timely as possible.

In the event of a courier cancellation please store specimens appropriately until your next available courier pick up.

Lockboxes and extreme temperatures

If your site utilizes a lockbox to store specimens prior to transport to Allina Health Laboratory, please note that when a lockbox is exposed to the elements, the insulation is not sufficient to protect specimens during extreme weather conditions. It is optimal to have the lockbox located in a protected area.

- If your lockbox is located outside of your building, in order to protect specimen integrity, the lockbox should not be used if the temperatures are below zero (0°F).
- If the temperatures are below zero (0°F), rather than place the specimens in your lockbox, they must be given directly to a courier to be placed in the appropriate temperature for transport.
- If you are unable to wait for the driver, and the specimens can not be held until your next direct courier pickup, an unscheduled courier pickup should be arranged.

This does not apply to lockboxes that are located within a building, protected from outdoor temperatures.

MICROBIOLOGY

MRSA culture obsolete

QUICK REFERENCE

Effective December 21, 2021, the MRSA culture (5678/87081.2) will become obsolete and will be made not orderable.

DETAILS

Methicillin resistant Staph aureus (MRSA) infection is associated with health care or community acquired transmission, and is difficult to treat due to resistance to some antibiotics. Prevention of the infection by timely testing and diagnosis is crucial to prevent the spread of MRSA. On December 21st, the Allina Health Central Microbiology Laboratory will discontinue offering MRSA culture (6578/87081.2). The suggested replacement test is a more rapid and sensitive PCR-based test, MRSA/MSSA PCR, nares (12440/LAB12440). The new PCR-based assay has a much better sensitivity and specificity as well as a faster turn-around time than culture-based testing.

- The new MRSA/MSSA PCR nasal assay has sensitivity and specificity of 92% and 98%, respectively, for MRSA and 93% and 90.5% for *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- Results will be available as two components: MRSA and SA (*Staphylococcus aureus*)

MRSA/MSSA PCR, nares available

QUICK REFERENCE

Effective December 21, 2021, a new test for MRSA will be available; MRSA/MSSA PCR, nares (12440/LAB12440).

DETAILS

MRSA infection is associated with health care or community acquired transmission and, due to resistance to some antibiotics, is difficult to treat. Prevention of the infection by timely testing and diagnosis is crucial to prevent the spread of MRSA. On December 21, 2021, Allina Health Laboratory will begin offering a more rapid and sensitive PCR-based test than the current culture options. The new PCR-based assay has a much better sensitivity and specificity and faster turn-around time than culture-based testing.

- MRSA PCR nasal assay has sensitivity and specificity of 92% and 98%, respectively, for MRSA and 93% and 90.5% for *Staphylococcus aureus*
- Results will be available as two components: MRSA and SA (*Staphylococcus aureus*)

Specimen type:

Only Nasal/nares samples are acceptable; any other specimen types should be submitted as an aerobic or appropriate culture order.

When should the MRSA nasal PCR test be ordered?

To assess for MRSA in patients within particular risk groups:

- Those presenting with pneumonia
- Pre-operative procedures for Joints, cardiovascular, pulmonary, etc., to assess intra-op prophylactic antibiotic choice
- Patients with a history of MRSA

Complete test ordering and sample information will be available in the Allina Health Laboratory Test catalog.

Ova and parasite exam obsolete

QUICK REFERENCE

Effective 12/21/21, Allina Health Laboratory will no longer be performing the Ova & parasite exam (6596/LAB6596) testing in-house. The test will become obsolete and made not orderable.

DETAILS

The suggested alternative test is the Ova and parasite examination, feces and sputum (14491/LAB14491), referred to LabCorp, which will be available for order beginning December 21, 2021.

Staph aureus culture obsolete

QUICK REFERENCE

Effective December 21, 2021, the Staph aureus culture (MRSA/MSSA), test number 12427/LAB12427 will become obsolete and will be made not orderable.

DETAILS

Methicillin resistant *Staph aureus* (MRSA) infection is associated with health care or community acquired transmission, and is difficult to treat due to resistance to some antibiotics. Prevention of the infection by timely testing and diagnosis is crucial to prevent the spread of MRSA. On December 21st, the Allina Health Central Microbiology Laboratory will discontinue offering the Staph aureus culture (MRSA/MSSA), test number 12427/LAB12427.

The suggested replacement test is a more rapid and sensitive PCR-based test, MRSA/MSSA nasal PCR screen (12440/LAB12440). The new PCR-based assay has a much more improved sensitivity and specificity as well as a faster turn-around time than culture-based testing.

- The new MRSA/MSSA PCR nasal assay has sensitivity and specificity of 92% and 98%, respectively, for MRSA and 93% and 90.5% for *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- Results will be available as two components: MRSA and SA (*Staphylococcus aureus*)

Ova and Parasites examination, feces and sputum assay available

QUICK REFERENCE

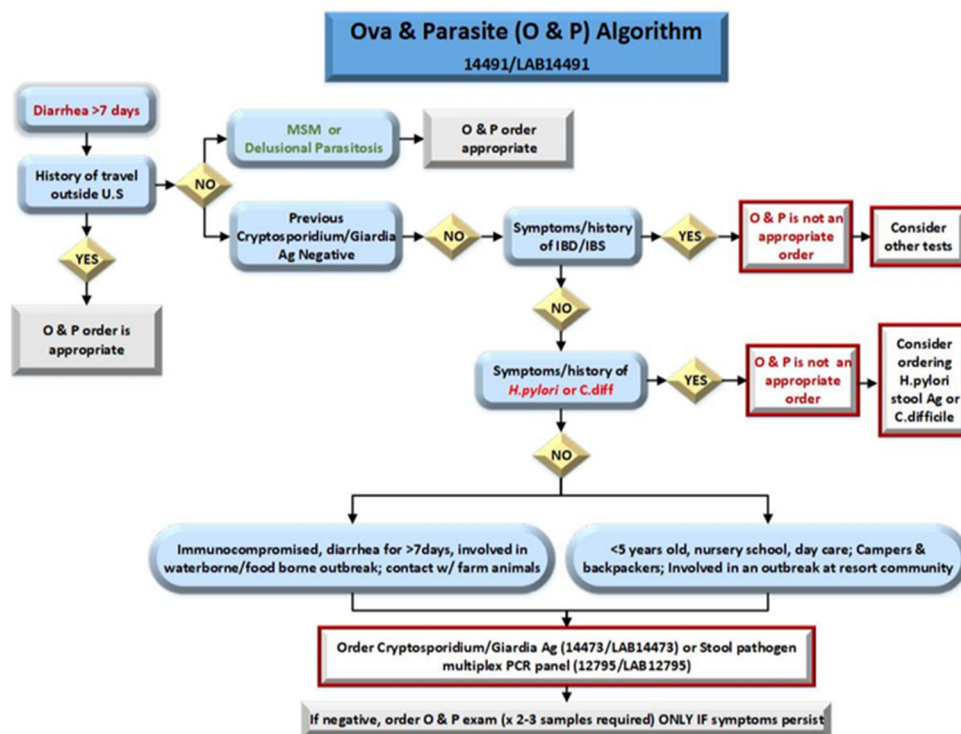
Effective December 21, 2021, a new test, Ova and parasite examination, feces and sputum (14491/LAB14491), referred to LabCorp, will be available to order. This test replaces the Ova & parasites exam (6596/LAB6596) currently performed in-house at Allina Health Laboratory.

DETAILS

Test guidance:

Ova and Parasite testing is appropriate for patients who have had diarrhea for at least 7 days and a recent negative Cryptosporidium/Giardia antigen test. If diarrhea is less than 7 days and does not have a recent negative test, order the Cryptosporidium/Giardia antigen (14473/LAB14473) test.

For patients suspected of potential parasitic diarrhea, THREE stool specimens collected on different days (within a 7-day period) should be submitted.



For patients suspected of paragonimiasis or echinococcosis, submit a sputum specimen.

New specimen transport containers:

The new test requires transport containers that differ from those currently used, Para-Pak® Zn PVA and formalin fixative (pink and grey). Collect stool in sterile cup and transfer stool to two transport containers (pink and grey). If collecting sputum, transfer sputum from sterile cup into one transport container (formalin – pink).



These new supplies are available to order in our supply catalog. It is suggested that you order no more than a one-month supply.

Complete test information:

Complete information on this new test will be available in our Test catalog on the effective date, December 21, 2021.

If you are an interfaced client, and this is a test that you may utilize at your facility, contact your Account representative to obtain build information and to arrange testing.

Thank you for choosing Allina Health Laboratory -

We value your business!