

DATE:	2021 November 29
TO:	Grimshaw Physicians, Nursing and Laboratory Staff
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
RE:	Abbott iSTAT Beta-HCG Testing

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Key Message

Effective 20 December 2021 on-site testing for quantitative blood hCG levels will be available at Grimshaw Laboratory. This test is to be used only for the investigation and management of ectopic pregnancy.

- Results from the i-STAT are not numerically equivalent to other analyzers. Do not compare results from method to method. Testing by the same method is required for serial monitoring.
- In the setting of an indiscriminate transvaginal ultrasound finding, the index of suspicion for ectopic pregnancy increases with an hCG concentration greater than ~1000 IU/L.
- Use of this test for the following purposes has **NOT** been validated:
 - Testing in larger hospitals with on-site access to quantitative hCG testing
 - Routine pregnancy screening
 - Monitoring of high-risk pregnancies
 - Monitoring of hCG-positive tumors and malignancies

Sample type and Reference Interval

- The test requires Lithium Heparin whole blood or Lithium Heparin plasma collected in plastic syringes or evacuated tubes filled to capacity.
- The reference interval for the test is <5 IU/L.
- All results greater than 2000 IU/L will be reported as >2000 IU/L.

Action Required

- If you are investigating an ectopic pregnancy, hCG must be ordered STAT or Urgent and write "ectopic pregnancy" on the requisition. Samples not meeting these requirements will be referred off-site.
- To place orders in Connect Care for ectopic pregnancy the order code is **HCG**, select **Beta hCG, Quantitative iSTAT**. It must be ordered STAT or Urgent.

Questions/Concerns

- Dr. Brent Mendez, Regional Lab Medicine Site Chief, Grande Prairie 780-538-7417

Approved by

- Dr. Michael Mengel, North Sector Medical Director, Alberta Public Laboratories (APL)
Chair Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, University of Alberta