

DATE:	2021 November 1
TO:	Physicians, Pharmacists, Nursing Staff, Laboratory Directors and Managers in Edmonton Zone, North Zone and Central Zone (Wainwright Health Centre, Vermilion Health Centre, Westlock Healthcare Centre)
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) and <i>DynaLIFE</i> Medical Labs
RE:	Change of Testing Methodology for Group A Streptococcal Pharyngitis Screening to a Molecular NAAT Assay (APPLICABLE ONLY TO SITES SERVICED BY DYNALIFE)

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Key Message

- Effective in **November 2021**, *DynaLIFE* Medical Labs will be changing its methodology for Group A Streptococcal Pharyngitis Screening from the current bacterial culture based approach to a molecular Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) based approach.
- Collection method (throat swab) using the Copan e-Swab liquid transport media will remain unchanged.
- Additional reflexing of screening for *Arcanobacterium haemolyticum*, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, Group C/G *Streptococcus* or yeast using the culture method will also remain unchanged. Please note that request for the screening of any one of these pathogens is based on physician's request and/or on provision of pertinent clinical information.
- If antimicrobial susceptibility testing is required for any given patient because of a history of anaphylactic reaction to beta-lactams, it is critically important to indicate it or request for this on the test requisition. Once a clinical sample is processed for the NAAT assay, microorganisms in the sample will be rendered non-viable.

Why is this important?

- Molecular NAAT methodology is a more sensitive and cost-effective method than the culture method in detecting Group A Streptococcus in clinical swab specimens and it is able to significantly reduce the turn-around-time to resulting compared to the latter.

Action Required

- No processes for specimen collection, handling, and shipping have changed

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

- Please contact Dr. Mao-Cheng Lee or the microbiologist on call at *DynaLIFE* Medical Labs for any further questions.

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

- Dr. Raymond Lai, Medical Director, *DynaLIFE* Medical Labs
- Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Interim Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL