



Safer Practice Notice

Status

- Active
- Updated
- Resolved

Zone Application

- Provincial
- North
- Edmonton
- Central
- Calgary
- South

For Action By:

- Nurses
- Unit Clerks
- Porters

July 13 2015

For Additional Information:

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Cerebrospinal Fluid (CSF) Sample Transport

Meningitis is a disease associated with a high morbidity and mortality. Rapid initiation of appropriate antimicrobial therapy is essential to improved clinical outcome.

CSF obtained from a lumbar puncture from a patient suspected of meningitis is a critical sample that requires expedited transport and processing to determine the etiologic agent.

- Transport of CSF samples from collection to receipt in the laboratory consistently does not meet the turnaround time required to provide optimal results for patient care.
- CSF samples must be sent to the laboratory immediately (within 15 minutes) after collection to ensure sample integrity and not delay efficient laboratory processing and rapid reporting of initial results (i.e. gram stain).

Action

- Deliver CSF samples directly to the lab **immediately** after collection.
- **DO NOT** leave sample on the laboratory reception counter; give the CSF sample directly to laboratory staff.
- Check your local laboratory guidelines to determine if alternate delivery systems can be used for transport of CSF samples to the lab, e.g., a pneumatic tube or telift system.
- **If Creutzfeldt - Jakob disease (CJD) is suspected, the laboratory must be notified and the samples must be hand delivered to the laboratory.**
- Sites without the capability to perform the required testing should arrange for expedited transport.
- For CSF specimens to be collected when lab staff is not on-site, phone ahead to ensure that lab staff will be available to do the required testing or, if required, to arrange for the expedited transport.
- Contact your local laboratory / microbiologist-on-call for issues related to specific cases / samples.