

DATE:	22 July 2024
TO:	All Zones: All Healthcare Professionals and Providers
FROM:	Public Health Laboratory, APL Laboratories
RE:	Lyme Disease Testing: Cancellation of Requests Lacking Clinical Information

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Key Message

- All requests for Lyme disease (LD) require relevant clinical history.
- The ProvLab Zoonotic Testing requisition should be used when ordering as it has the appropriate fields for collecting the required information.
- When ordering in Connect Care, fully complete the history questions, especially the pertinent travel areas where the tick bite occurred, and date of onset of symptoms.
- Confirmatory testing, when required, is based upon the clinical information provided.
- The absence of clinical history will result in the cancellation of testing, although the serum will be stored for 2 weeks pending receipt of this information. To reinstate the test, complete the Zoonotic Testing requisition & Fax it to 403 270 2216.

Background

- Presently, the province of Alberta is not endemic for Lyme disease. However, the infection can be acquired following a tick bite in an endemic area which are other provinces in Canada, various US states and European countries.
- Initial testing for antibodies to LD is performed at the ProvLab. Samples with a positive or equivocal result are then referred to the National Microbiology Laboratory, Winnipeg, for confirmatory testing.
- Selection of confirmatory test(s) is dependent upon the clinical picture and especially travel history. Absence of this information will result in cancellation of testing.
- Testing for LD in the absence of supportive clinical and epidemiologic information can often result in false-positive findings which then require additional and unnecessary follow-up investigations and/or treatment & referrals. Testing in the early stages of a localized infection, i.e., within 5-7 days of the appearance of the rash will result in a false negative or equivocal result that may require follow-up serology to verify the initial findings.

Action Required

- Review the patient history/symptoms to ensure they are compatible with Lyme disease infection
- Use the Zoonotic Testing requisition to order Lyme disease, available at:
 - [Zoonotic Testing Requisition form \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](https://albertahealthservices.ca/zoonotic-testing-requisition-form) **OR**
 - APL Guide to Services [Alberta Precision Laboratories | Lab Services \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](https://albertahealthservices.ca/lab-services); search Lyme Disease & click on Public Health link. The page content has the link to the requisition, other testing information and result interpretation.



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- Complete the “Mandatory Clinical History” fields on the Zoonotic Testing requisition as completely as possible OR the required history questions when ordering in Connect Care.
- The Patient Service Centres only collect the blood and do not review the information on the requisition for completeness.

Effective Immediately

Questions/Concerns

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Approved by

- Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical-Scientific Director, Public Health Laboratory, APL

Websites:

APL Guide to Services - [Alberta Precision Laboratories | Lab Services \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](https://albertahealthservices.ca)

Alberta Health – Lyme disease management guidelines - <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/lyme-disease> (accessed June 2024)

Public Health Agency of Canada – Lyme disease - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/lyme-disease/health-professionals-lyme-disease.html> (accessed June 2024)

Effective September 1, 2023, APL has become the sole provider of all public lab services in Alberta. As a result, community lab services formally provided by DynaLIFE Medical Labs will become the responsibility of Alberta Precision Labs (APL). This change impacts all zones.