

DATE:	22 July 2024
TO:	Health Care Providers at Grande Prairie Regional Hospital, Chinook Regional Hospital and Medicine Hat Regional Hospital
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
RE:	Replacement of Amies Swabs with ESwabs for Microbiology Specimens

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message

- **Effective July 22, 2024**, Grande Prairie, Chinook (Lethbridge) and Medicine Hat Regional Hospitals will transition to the ***ESwab Amies Liquid-Based Multipurpose Collection and Transportation System***, for microbiology specimens, replacing the current swabs (Amies Gel, magenta cap).



Current Amies (magenta top) to be replaced



New ESwab

Background

- The ESwab is appropriate for collection of most tests previously done with Amies gel swabs: routine bacterial culture, Group A Strep testing and Group B Strep screening.
- The ESwab provides better analytical sensitivity and reproducibility for microbiological stains, cultures and other testing.
- The ESwab is in use elsewhere in the province for these purposes. The media is the same that is included in the Dual Swab kits currently used for MRSA screening. As the Dual Swab kits are more expensive than the kits with a single swab, use them for MRSA screening only.

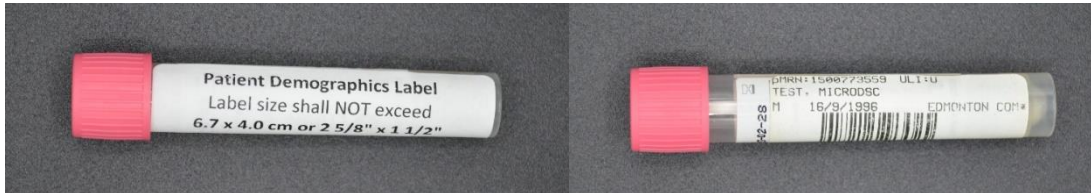
How this will impact you

- Collection of tissue, bone or fluid is preferable to a swab. If your site uses anaerobic swabs, continue to use them for specimens that require anaerobic culture (including deep wound swabs).
- Do not use ESwabs for respiratory or lesion virus testing (e.g. respiratory viruses (including SARS-CoV-2) HSV/VZV) or pertussis testing. Continue to use Universal/Viral Transport Media and Regan-Lowe media, respectively.

- The chart below lists the current swab(s) in use and the new replacement ordering information for the ESwab collection and transportation system.

Current			New		
Oracle #	Description	Supplier / Supplier #	Oracle #	Description	Supplier / Supplier #
113789	SWAB TUBE COLLECTION AMIES CLEAR MAGENTA STARSWABS II 6 INCH	VWR INTERNATIONAL CA66410-103L	364899	TUBE COLLECTION 1ML LIQUID AMIES MEDIUM WITH 1 REGULAR FLOQSWABS PINK SCREW CAP ESWAB	MICRONOSTYX INC CA480CE
158993	SWAB TUBE COLLECTION AMIES CHARCOAL BLACK STARSWABS II 6 INCH	VWR CA66410-105L			

- During the transition specimens submitted using the Amies gel collection systems will be processed until such time that existing stocks have been exhausted and replaced with the ESwab.
- To avoid processing delays, place the identification label no larger than 6.7 x 4.0cm vertically on the vial, directly under (and not on top of) the cap (see figure below). Barcodes, if present, should be perpendicular to the length of the tube.



Action Required – Ordering information

- Conversion of your current swabs will be automatically occurring on supply carts. Please work with your local CPSM Site Services staff.

Questions/Concerns may be directed to

- Pamela Churko, APL Provincial Microbiology Discipline Lead, Medical Microbiology, Pamela.Churko@albertaprecisionlabs.ca
- For supply questions please contact your local CPSM site Services staff.

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

- Dr. Carolyn O’Hara, Interim Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL