

DATE:	25 May 2026
TO:	All Physicians and Health Care Providers Involved in Bone Marrow Specimen Collection
FROM:	APL Microbiology
RE:	Bone Marrow Collection Device Changes for Fungal and Bacterial Cultures

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Key Message

1. The collection device for **fungal culture of bone marrow** is changing from SPS (sodium polyanethol sulfonate) tubes to **lithium heparin tubes** (dark green top).
2. The collection device for **bacterial culture of bone marrow** is one **pediatric blood culture bottle**.

Background

- SPS tubes have historically been used to collect bone marrow for culture of some filamentous fungi. However, these tubes are now being discontinued by the manufacturer and are no longer available.
- Lithium heparin tubes have been reviewed and approved as an acceptable alternative for the collection of bone marrow for culture of filamentous fungi.
- Collection device recommendations for bone marrow specimens for bacterial culture were different throughout the province. A single pediatric blood culture bottle is now the recommended device, as the volume of bone marrow inoculated is often less than 5 mL, optimizing the specimen to broth ratio.

How this will impact you

- SPS Vacutainer tubes are no longer available for fungal cultures of bone marrow.
- Bone marrow collections for the following tests require the following collection devices:

Test	Updated Collection Device
Fungal culture [LAB4072] of bone marrow	One 4 ml lithium heparin tube (dark green top) Alternative: Sodium heparin tube
Bone Marrow Culture [LAB4061] (bacterial)	One pediatric blood culture bottle Alternative: Routine aerobic blood culture bottle

- Collection instructions displayed in Connect Care and associated specimen collection references on the APL test directory will be updated to reflect the changes.
- All other specimen collection, labeling, storage, and transport requirements remain unchanged.

Action Required

- Continue to order Fungal Culture [LAB4072] for bone marrow and/or Bone Marrow Culture [LAB4061] as per standard practice.
- Use the appropriate specimen collection devices as detailed above.
- Update local procedures, job aids, and educational materials to reflect this change.
- Ensure all staff involved in ordering and specimen collection are informed of the updated collection requirements.



Updated Collection Devices			
Oracle #	Description	Supplier / Supplier #	Zone
204522	Lithium heparin (green top) tubes	Becton Dickinson	All Zones
284279	Pediatric blood culture bottle	bioMérieux	Calgary
320430	Pediatric blood culture bottle	Becton Dickinson	Edmonton, Central, North, South

- Refer to collection information in Connect Care or the Alberta Precision Labs Test Directory ([Alberta Precision Laboratories | Lab Services](#))
- Direct questions regarding appropriate diagnostic testing for your patient to the APL Microbiologist on-call.

Effective June 1, 2026

Questions/Concerns

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Approved by

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