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**Date:** March 8, 2021  
**To:** Calgary Zone Hospitals, Nursing Units and Managers  
**From:** Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Calgary, Microbiology  
**Re:** Expired Blood Culture Bottles

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**PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE**

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**Key Message:**

- Do **not** use blood culture bottles that have **expired** or show signs of contamination (e.g. turbidity, bulging septum).

**Why This Is Important:**

- Expired blood culture bottles are not appropriate for collection of clinical specimens, as they may be unable to support growth of fastidious organisms and may also be prone to contamination. Results may not be reliable.

**Action Required:**

- Check the expiry date of blood culture bottles in your unit's inventory to ensure that they have not yet expired. The expiry date is shown in diagram below.
- Check the expiry date of blood culture bottles prior to each use.
- Dispose of expired bottles in a biohazard/sharps container.
- Order new blood culture bottles through routine ordering protocols.
  - If in-date blood culture bottles are urgently needed and none are available on your unit, contact the on-site laboratory.



**Additional Information:**

- Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) Guide to Services – Blood Cultures, Calgary Zone:  
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/webapps/labservices/indexAPL.asp?id=5940&tests=&zoneid=1&details=true>

**Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:**

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**This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:**

- Leland Baskin, MD, Associate Medical Director, South Sector