

DATE:	29 April 2024
TO:	All Acute Care Health Care Providers
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL), Microbiology
RE:	New Specimen Collection Device for MRSA Screening

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Key Message

- Effective **May 13, 2024**, acute care locations in all zones are to begin using the ESwab MRSA Collection System (dual-swab) for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) screening.



Background

- Standard MRSA screening entails collection of swabs from both nasal and inguinal/groin sources, transported in individual vials (i.e., 2 Eswabs/Amies swabs, 2 vials/containers).
- The ESwab MRSA Collection System has flocked swabs that immediately release the specimen into the liquid medium, allowing for transport of specimens sequentially collected by 2 swabs in a single vial, facilitating laboratory testing and reducing the cost.

Action Required

- Use the ESwab MRSA Collection System to collect specimens for MRSA screening.**
Each ESwab MRSA collection system contains: a screw-cap tube filled with 1mL of liquid medium, one pink swab, and one white swab.
 - Open the pouch containing the ESwab MRSA collection system and remove the tube and the pink swab.
 - Use **pink swab** to collect the nasal specimen.
 - Uncap the tube, making sure not to spill the medium. Insert the swab into the tube. Dip and gently stir the swab for 5 seconds.
 - Lift the swab from the liquid medium, swirling the swab against the tube walls 5 times to release the medium from the tip of the swab while holding the tube away from one's face. Remove the swab and recap.
 - Discard the pink swab in a Biohazard container.**
 - Use the **white swab** to collect the inguinal specimen.
 - Uncap the tube, insert the swab, then break it at the colored ink breakpoint mark. Discard the broken swab shaft into a medical waste disposal container.



- Replace the cap on the tube and secure tightly. Place an identification label no larger than 6.7 x 4.0 cm 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.
 - **Correct labelling of ESwabs prevents processing delays.**



• **ESwab ordering information**

- Acute Care (Hospitals, Urgent Care): the new item will be available at this time in the Edmonton and Calgary Distribution centers, all other areas will need to Direct Purchase this item from the Supplier.

Ordering and collection of swabs for all other tests (e.g., cultures, respiratory virus testing, viral lesion testing) has not changed.

New		
Oracle #	Description	Supplier
393475	SWAB DOUBLE W/ TUBE 1ML LIQUID AMIES MEDIUM	MICRONOSTYX INC CA493C02

Questions/Concerns may be directed to

- Pamela Churko, Microbiology Discipline Lead, Pamela.Churko@albertaprecisionlabs.ca
- Dr. Luiz Lisboa, Medical Microbiologist, APL, Luiz.Lisboa@albertaprecisionlabs.ca
- Dr. Prenilla Naidu, Medical Microbiologist, APL, Prenilla.Naidu@albertaprecisionlabs.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

- Dr. Carolyn O’Hara, Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, APL, Carolyn.Ohara@albertaprecisionlabs.ca

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.