



Date: March 8, 2021
To: Calgary and South Zone: Physicians, Podiatrists and Operating Room Staff
From: Microbiology Section, South Sector, Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
Re: Pre-Reduced Anaerobic Sterilized (PRAS) Transport Media Change

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Key Message:

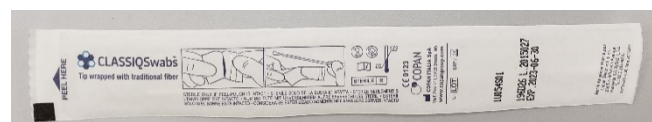
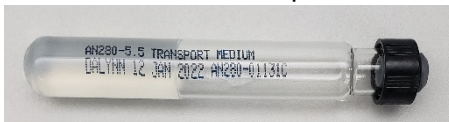
- Effective **immediately**, the new specimen containers used for anaerobic swabs (Pre-Reduced Anaerobic Sterilized, or PRAS, transport media) will no longer include the swab due to manufacturer shortages.
- Tissues, bone, and fluids are the preferred specimen types from the OR for microbiology testing.

Background:

- Use of swabs should be avoided when superior specimens such as tissue, bone and fluid are readily available.^{1,2} Swabs have poor sensitivity compared to tissue culture due to lower sampling volume and cannot be used for fungal or mycobacterial cultures.

Action Required:

1. Where possible, collect tissue, bone, or fluid specimens for microbiology culture.
2. If a swab is the only type of specimen that can be collected, ensure the correct swab and container are used.
3. Continue to use PRAS containers as outlined in APL Collection of Samples for Anaerobes, Guidelines for Physicians: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/if-lab-tc-cal-anaerobe-collection-mi6005.pdf>. The new PRAS container can be ordered routinely: Anaerobic Transport Medium (Modified Cary-Blair) 5.5 mL 10/pkg, Oracle # 185229.
 - **These new containers do not come packaged with a swab.** Order and use the Regular Dacron Swab W 100MM Breakpoint, Oracle #376230 in combination with this PRAS container.



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

References:

1. Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Canada. Choosing Wisely Canada; Medical Microbiology, Five Things Physicians and Patients Should Question. February 1, 2017. <https://choosingwiselycanada.org/medical-microbiology/> <accessed February 2, 2021>
2. Baron EJ, et al. A Guide to Utilization of the Microbiology Laboratory for Diagnosis of Infectious Diseases. Clinical Infectious Diseases 2013;57(4):e22–121.