

DATE:	2022 March 23
TO:	Calgary and South Zone Physicians and Nursing Units
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Microbiology South Sector and Public Health Laboratory
RE:	Rotavirus Antigen Test Unavailability

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Key Message

- **Effective March 24**, rotavirus antigen testing in Calgary and southern Alberta will be temporarily unavailable due to a manufacturer reagent shortage.
- Specimens from higher risk patients (see below) will be tested with the viral gastroenteritis PCR panel.

Why This Is Important

- Specimens submitted for rotavirus testing will be tested at the Public Health Laboratory for:
 - community patients younger than 6 years old,
 - hospitalized patients, and
 - outbreak investigations.
- These specimens will be tested with the viral gastroenteritis PCR panel, which detects rotavirus, norovirus, sapovirus, astrovirus and adenovirus. Refer to the APL test directory for more information [[Gastroenteritis - Viral - Public Health \(ProvLab\)](#)].
- Requests for rotavirus antigen testing on all other patients will be cancelled until the reagent shortage resolves.

Action Required

- Only order viral gastroenteritis testing if it is required for acute patient management.
- Rotavirus testing requests for the higher risk patient categories as above will be automatically sent for the viral gastroenteritis PCR panel. No change to ordering process is required.

Background

- In most healthy children and adults, rotavirus causes a self-limiting diarrheal illness.
- Management is supportive, as there is no targeted therapy available.
- The rate of rotavirus disease has decreased since inclusion of the rotavirus vaccine into the routine childhood immunization schedule Alberta in 2015.
- Testing for viral pathogens in stool may be helpful in severe cases requiring hospitalization and investigation of outbreaks.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

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This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by

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