
Date: July 29, 2019
To: North Zone - Beaverlodge and McLennan Physicians, Nursing and Laboratory Supervisor
From: Alberta Public Laboratories (APL)
Re: Abbott iSTAT Beta-HCG Testing

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message:

- Effective **29 July 2019** on-site testing for quantitative blood hCG levels will be available in Beaverlodge and McLennan Laboratories. This test is to be used only for the investigation and management of ectopic pregnancy.
- Results from the i-STAT are not numerically equivalent to other analyzers. Do not compare results from method to method. Testing by the same method is required for serial monitoring.
- In the setting of an indiscriminate transvaginal ultrasound finding, the index of suspicion for ectopic pregnancy increases with an hCG concentration greater than ~1000 IU/L.
- Use of this test for the following purposes has **NOT** been validated:
 - Testing in larger hospitals with on-site access to quantitative hCG testing
 - Routine pregnancy screening
 - Monitoring of high-risk pregnancies
 - Monitoring of hCG-positive tumors and malignancies

Sample type and Reference Interval:

- The test requires Lithium Heparin whole blood or Lithium Heparin plasma collected in plastic syringes or evacuated tubes filled to capacity.
- The reference interval for the test is <5 IU/L.
- All results greater than 2000 IU/L will be reported as >2000 IU/L.

Action Required:

- If you are investigating an ectopic pregnancy hCG must be ordered STAT or Urgent and write "ectopic pregnancy" on the requisition. Samples not meeting these requirements will be referred off-site.
- To place Meditech orders for ectopic pregnancy the new order code is **HCG** and must be ordered STAT or Urgent.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

- Dr. Brent Mendez, Regional Lab Medicine Site Chief, Grande Prairie 780-538-7417

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

- Dr. Carolyn O'Hara, Interim Chief Medical Laboratory Officer, Alberta Public Laboratories (APL)