Date: July 16, 2018
To: Central, Calgary and South Zone Family Physicians, Gastroenterologists, Pediatricians, Pediatric Gastroenterologists and Internists
From: Dr. Lawrence de Koning, Clinical Biochemist – Calgary Laboratory Services - Alberta Children’s Hospital, Dr. Mark Swain, Section Head – Gastroenterology – Foothills Medical Centre, Dr. Steven R. Martin, Section Head – Pediatric Gastroenterology – Alberta Children’s Hospital
Re: Changes to 72-hour Quantitative Fecal Fat Testing at Calgary Laboratory Services

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message:

Effective July 12 2018:
- The chemical method for 72-hour quantitative fecal fat at Calgary Laboratory Services will be replaced with an assessment of specimen weight and a qualitative microscopic test for fat globules
- Restrictions placed in 2015 on fecal fat testing of specimens for adult patients will be removed.
- All specimens will be tested regardless of patient age, and consultation with a clinical biochemist is no longer needed.
- This change affects areas that send specimens to Calgary Laboratory Services: Calgary Zone, South Zone, and parts of Central Zone i.e. Three Hills, Hanna and Drumheller

Background:
- The chemical method for fecal fat is largely obsolete given the abundance of alternative tests and clinical assessments

Why this is important:
- Specimen weight will be compared to age-specific cut-points with 80% specificity for abnormal fat excretion. Specimen weight greater than or equal to cut-points will be reported in a comment as ‘HIGH’, whereas weight below cut-points will be reported as ‘NORMAL’. The interpretive comment will be appended to 72-hour specimen weight.
- The weight assessment should be interpreted in addition to results from the test for fat globules

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:
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This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:
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