
Date: June 3, 2019
To: Medicine Hat Area Physicians
From: Alberta Public Laboratories - Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Site, Microbiology
Re: Expansion of Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) testing

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Key Message:

- Effective June 3, 2019, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital microbiology laboratory, will begin testing for **Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC)** on **all stool cultures**.

Why this is important:

- Previously, STEC screening was performed on patients with bloody stool, or at extremes of age.
- Now, both O157 and non-O157 serotypes will be detected on all patients. All STEC serotypes will be reported as "Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*" on a single stool culture report.
- The report will continue to indicate if the isolate produces Shiga toxin (Stx) 1, Stx2, or both.

Background:

- Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) is a cause of diarrheal disease, and may cause the development of hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS).
- The use of antibiotics may increase the risk of development of HUS.
- Infections with STEC producing Stx2 are more likely to cause HUS than those producing Stx1.
- If further information regarding STEC and HUS is needed, please refer to:
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hp/diseases/if-hp-dis-ecoli-stec.pdf>

Action Required:

- No change to ordering or collection is needed. Refer to the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital Guide to Services for collection instructions.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

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