

Date: April 9, 2015
To: South Zone East - Medicine Hat Regional Hospital
Physicians, Nursing and Laboratory Staff
From: AHS Laboratory Services - South Zone East
Re: Discontinuation of Bleeding Time testing at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Messages:

- Bleeding Time testing will be discontinued as of April 10, 2015 at Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.

Why this is important:

- Bleeding time is not a useful test because it is neither sensitive nor specific.
- Due to the manual nature of the test and variations in patient skin texture and thickness, the results are not reproducible.
- Depending on the clinical situation - personal or family history of bleeding, the nature of the bleeding (mucosal or soft tissue), presence of thrombocytopenia or use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or anti-platelet agents - more sensitive and specific tests are available.
- Bleeding Time test volumes are low in Medicine Hat, making maintaining competency difficult.

Action Required:

- Patients undergoing evaluation for Bleeding Disorders require a comprehensive clinical and laboratory assessment. For example, evaluation for von Willebrand's disease requires factor antigen and activity testing which can be collected in Medicine Hat and referred for testing at Calgary Laboratory Services. These tests are much more sensitive and specific than the bleeding time. Please request either hemophilia testing or particular factor assays. It is important to provide the laboratory with the patient's personal history of bleeding, family history of confirmed bleeding disorders and medication history (especially use of Aspirin and NSAIDs).

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

Dr. Michael O'Connor at 403-529-8867 or email: Michael.O'Connor@albertahealthservices.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

Dr. Michael O'Connor, Zone Clinical Department Head (Co-Lead) Laboratory Medicine, South Zone