



Date: April 9, 2020
To: Banff and Canmore Physicians; Nurse Managers, Educators, and Practitioners
From: Banff Laboratory, Microbiology, Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL)
Re: Transition of Group A Streptococcus Pharyngitis to GASDirect Test

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message:

- Effective **April 13, 2020**, throat swabs submitted to rule out Group A streptococcal pharyngitis will be routinely analyzed by the GASDirect Test (by Hologic Gen-Probe, Inc.), as opposed to the current culture method.
- There is no change to the collection technique or swab (Amies red-top) for this test.
- Throat culture will only be performed in cases of penicillin allergy, treatment failure, or to exclude specific pathogens (e.g. *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*).

Why this is Important:

- GASDirect test is a DNA probe for *Streptococcus pyogenes*, and provides a quicker turnaround time than culture.
- The sensitivity of the GASDirect assay is comparable to that of throat culture (90-95%).
- The GASDirect assay does not amplify an organism for susceptibility testing, or detect other organisms other than *S. pyogenes*.

Action Required:

- Continue ordering and collecting Group A strep throat swabs according to the current process.
- Complete the requisition correctly, especially if culture/susceptibility testing is required.

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

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- Wilson Chan, MD, Medical Microbiologist, 403-770-3338, wilson.chan@aplabs.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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