

**Date:** November 18, 2019  
**To:** Calgary Zone Physicians  
**From:** APL Microbiology Section  
**Re:** Transport of Laboratory Specimens

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### Key Messages:

- Routine microbiology specimens must be transported to the laboratory within 24 hours of collection.
- Specimens delayed in transport will yield unreliable results and may not be processed.
- If microbiology specimens are collected in clinic after the APL courier has completed daily pick-up, patients or clinic staff should drop specimens off at Patient Service Centres (PSCs). On Fridays, failure to do so could delay receipt of specimens in Microbiology department by >72 hours.

### Why this is Important:

- Accurate microbiology results require specimens be processed as soon as possible. Delays may cause false negative or false-positive results due to specimen degradation or bacterial overgrowth.
- Delayed transport will also delay result reporting.

### Action Required:

- Patients or clinic staff should drop microbiology specimens off at PSCs when delayed delivery is anticipated (for example, preceding a weekend).
- For location and hours of Patient Service Centre for specimen drop-off, refer to: <http://www.calgarylabservices.com/lab-patient/lab-locations/PSC-lab-locations.aspx>
- Note that patients or clinic staff do not need to wait or book an appointment when dropping off a specimen. Specimens should be dropped at the desk with a PSC staff person.
- Store specimens in accordance with guidelines in the CLS Guide to Services until drop-off.

### Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

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### This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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