



Date: June 22, 2020
To: All Physicians and Healthcare Providers
From: Alberta Precision Laboratories
RE: Relaunch of Laboratory Services in Alberta

Lab collection services in Alberta have been impacted in various ways since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the peak of the pandemic has passed, Alberta Health Services has begun to resume surgical, ambulatory, emergency department and other health services that were impacted or paused during the pandemic. Family physician clinics are also resuming services and ordering lab work that may have been postponed in recent months.

In order to serve the needs of Alberta patients who require blood work or other tests, Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) has developed a plan to resume collection services across the province.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) is moving towards a **'new normal'** as we resume laboratory collection services that may have been changed, paused or reduced during COVID-19.
- This means we have to change the way we do some things. **Patients' experiences when they visit the lab will be different than it was prior to the pandemic.**
- As service resume, the **labs must still adhere to public health guidelines.** Enhanced cleaning, patient screening, physical distancing, use of PPE (continuous masking), and fewer walk-in options in favour of pre-booked appointments to manage patient flow are some of the things patients can expect.
- **This will impact wait times and the volumes of patients that can be served by our labs.**
- APL's Patient Service Centres and collection locations are currently able to operate at approximately 70 per cent of pre-pandemic capacity.
- Safety of our patients and our staff is our priority as we resume collecting bloodwork and specimen collections. We are trying to balance safety with convenience for patients.
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to the relaunch of lab services; various sites and communities will resume services as they are able to do so safely, based on local conditions and considerations.
- **APL asks for the continued cooperation of physicians in using their best clinical judgement to determine the urgency and necessity of testing;** we will work with our physician and provider partners to provide as much information as possible so you are aware of how, where and when lab services are resuming across Alberta.

ACTIONS:

- Please continue to use your best clinical judgement when ordering lab work for patients. This will help ensure that patients in most need of urgent bloodwork or other testing required for their immediate care will receive it in a timely way.
- Local memos specific to your communities and sites lab operations will follow. These will outline hours of operation, details on appointment bookings, and availability of any special collection options available at your local lab collection sites. Please watch for these memos in the coming days.
- Patient Instruction Sheets have been developed and will accompany local memos to be provided shortly. We strongly encourage your clinic to provide these Patients Instruction Sheets to patients along with their lab requisition.
- The most up-dated information on lab services will be posted on our website at albertaprecisionlabs.ca

NEXT STEPS FOR LAB SERVICES:

- Lab services across Alberta will be relaunching in a thoughtful and staged way as we adapt to a 'new normal' that follows public health requirements and keep patients and staff safe.
- Further communications will be provided to physicians and providers through local memos; Patient Instruction Sheets will be shared in the coming days.
- Website will be updated with appointment information for patients: albertaprecisionlabs.ca
- DynaLIFE appointment booking information for Edmonton, North and Central locations is linked off the APL website.
- Local public service announcements (PSAs), interior and exterior signage, and social media communications will be shared to help inform patients and the public of changes to lab services
- Patients should postpone visiting the lab if they are symptomatic and/or they have routine lab work that can be delayed.

QUESTIONS MAY BE DIRECTED TO:

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