



Communicating Critical Values

To ensure patient safety, NSMC has a defined policy and regularly monitors the timeliness of reporting and documenting critical test results. The policy requires the lab technologist to confirm the result and immediately communicate the result to the responsible physician or nurse practitioner directly.

The caregiver receiving the verbal report will document the result and read back the patient name, test name and critical value result to the reporting technologist. The technologist is then required to record in the Sunquest lab information system the name of the caregiver who received the verbal report. This information will appear on the patient's critical lab report.

Packaging Specimens

To ensure the lab requisition is protected should the specimen container leak during transport, please enclose the req in the protective outside pocket on the biohazard bag, separated from the specimen itself.

Mayo Medical Laboratories as the New Partners Ref Lab

As planned and announced last July, North Shore Medical Center Laboratories will complete implementation of Mayo Medical Laboratories as our primary reference lab in March 2008. This selection was the result of a system-wide effort to consolidate reference lab testing sent out by the five major Partners hospitals.

Mayo Medical Laboratories is the diagnostic reference lab for the Mayo Clinic and specializes in esoteric testing, providing timely, high quality laboratory services both nationwide and internationally. They operate a regional laboratory that is based locally in Wilmington, MA. Utilizing Mayo Medical Labs will enable us to provide you with an improved level of service including reduced turnaround times on reference work.

We are currently working with the Mayo team on an orders and results interface that will help reference lab test results reach our clients quickly and in an automated fashion. More information will follow as we move forward on this exciting project.

New Technology in Microbiology

Training is underway for a newly acquired analyzer from Gen-Probe Inc. called the Tigris® DTS™ System. Using Absolute Automation, the analyzer automates all phases of molecular diagnostics testing from sample preparation, amplification, and detection to reporting results.

Aptima® is a nucleic acid amplification test for Gonorrhoeae and Chlamydia in cervical, urethral and urine samples.

Nucleic acid amplification is a methodology that amplifies DNA and/or RNA thereby increasing the sensitivity of the assay.

APTIMA	SENSITIVITY	SPECIFICITY
CHLAMYDIA	95.9%	98.2%
GC	97.8%	98.9%

Each year, close to four million cases of chlamydia and one million cases of gonorrhea occur in the United States. Coinfection with Chlamydia trachomatis (CT) and Neisseria gonorrhoeae (GC) is not uncommon. In fact, up to half of patients diagnosed may be infected with both pathogens and, therefore, it is important to test all sexually active individuals for both CT and GC. Further, the complications that can result from untreated chlamydia and gonorrhea can be serious. Recent CDC recommendations call for expanded chlamydia testing. It is recommended that all sexually active adolescent women be screened for chlamydia at least once a year. Close to half (46%) of chlamydia cases occur in women ages 15-19 and another one third (33%) of infections occur in females between the ages of 20-24.
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Office Manager's Luncheon

NSMC Lab and Radiology Depts. invites all Office Managers to an informational luncheon on Wednesday, February 22, 2008 at 11:30 a.m. at the Salem Campus, Davenport 1, Room 102A. Please RSVP to Andrea Utne at (978) 354-4284, or email at autne@partners.org

Holiday Schedule

We will be observing the Presidents Day Holiday on Mon., Feb. 18th. The phlebotomy and courier departments will service stats only, unless your office has advised us it is open and needs a scheduled pick up.

Please call 978-354-4134 should you have questions or wish to schedule a pick up.

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(continued) Young individuals are also at an increased risk for gonorrhea. In fact, seventy-five percent (75%) of all reported cases occur in individuals between the ages of 15 to 29 years.

This test will be available to clients in the first quarter of 2008 and more information will be provided, as we get closer.

Reporting Format Change For Certain Serology Tests

Effective Monday, February 11th please be aware there will be a change in reporting format involving certain infectious agent serologic testing. The tests include the following:

Cytomegalovirus IgG
Varicella zoster IgG
Helicobacter pylori antibodies

Lyme IgG/IgM
Mumps IgG
Rubella IgG

Current reporting involves a numeric absorbance value. The new format will be the qualitative interpretive value: Positive, Equivocal, or Negative. This change is only a reporting change, current test methodologies remain the same.

If you have any questions regarding this change please contact the Serology Laboratory at 978-354-4128 between the hours of 7:30 am and 3:30 pm, or you may contact Khalid Butt M.D. at 978-354- 2116 at the Salem Campus or 781-581-9200, ext. 2453 at the Union Campus.

Alcohol-Based Hand Rubs Don't Kill All Germs

Alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR), aka alcohol-based sanitizers, are effective against all known organisms except for spore-forming bacteria. The widespread prevalence of healthcare-associated diarrhea caused by *Clostridium difficile* and the recent occurrence in the United States of human *Bacillus anthracis* infections associated with contaminated items sent through the postal system (Vol. 51 / RR-16 Recommendations and Reports 17) has raised concerns regarding the activity of antiseptic agents against spore-forming bacteria.

None of the agents (including alcohols, chlorhexidine, hexachlorophene, iodophors, PCMX, and triclosan) used in antiseptic handwash or antiseptic hand-rub preparations are reliably sporicidal against *Clostridium* spp. or *Bacillus* spp. Washing hands with nonantimicrobial or antimicrobial soap and water may help you physically remove spores from the surface of contaminated hands.

After gloves are removed, hands should be washed with a non-antimicrobial or an antimicrobial soap and water or disinfected with an alcohol-based hand rub. During outbreaks of *C. difficile*-related infections, washing hands with a non-antimicrobial or antimicrobial soap and water after removing gloves is prudent. Employees with suspected or documented exposure to *B. anthracis*-contaminated items also should be encouraged to wash their hands with a nonantimicrobial or antimicrobial soap and water. Ref: *Lab Safety Advisor*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1/22/08, HCPA, Inc. Reprinted with permission.