

Swab and Collection Containers for Microbiology

Dr. Diana Whellams, Medical Microbiologist, MD, FRCPC

Need to know which swab to use for a wound culture? Wondering about the correct collection container for *C. difficile* testing?

The variety of swabs and containers required for different microbiology tests can be confusing, and our lab may reject a test if the incorrect collection container is used.

Fortunately, there's an online PDF—including photos—that outlines which swab or container can be used for which test order in microbiology. It also includes phone numbers and forms for clinics to order supplies to have on hand for testing.

Access the Microbiology Swab and Collection Containers guide online at <https://lifelabs.azureedge.net/lifelabs-wp-cdn/2020/02/Microbiology-Swab-and-Collection-Containers-LifeLabs-BC.pdf>.

Our Test Information Directory, which provides information about all LifeLabs tests—everything from collection container to turnaround time—can be found online at https://tests.lifelabs.com/Laboratory_Test_Information/Homepage.aspx?kcook=yes&returnURL=/Laboratory_Test_Information/Search.aspx

Microbiology Swab and Collection Containers

Microbiology Swabs

Swabs and collection containers may be ordered by submitting a Clinic and Healthcare Provider Supply Requisition to LifeLabs or by calling (604) 412-4481 (Lower Mainland), (250) 881-3100 ext. 2124 (Victoria), 1-800-304-4011 ext 2124 (other Island locations) or (250) 374-1644 (Kamloops)

[Clinic and Healthcare Provider Supply Requisition - Lower Mainland](#)
[Clinic and Healthcare Provider Supply Requisition - Vancouver Island](#)

LifeLabs Swab Collection Containers	
	Culturette – Copan Liquid Amies Single Plastic Swab Routine Bacterial Culture for throats, wounds, vagina, etc. Not for Chlamydia/GC/Trichomonas PCR/NAAT
	Mini Culturettes – Copan Liquid Amies Aluminum Wire Swab (Small tipped swab) Male Urethra Culture – Used for bacterial culture only. Not for Chlamydia/GC/Trichomonas PCR/NAAT
	Anaerobic Culture Swab and Transport Media Specifically designed for recovery of anaerobic organisms from wounds.

**Would you like to receive this newsletter automatically by email?
 Are there specific topics you'd like to learn about?
 We want to hear from you!**

We are working to make this newsletter more accessible and relevant to physicians and other healthcare providers. If you'd like to be added to an email list *exclusively* for this newsletter (you will not be contacted for other reasons or sent other materials), please email

Diana.Whellams@lifelabs.com.

Have you ever wondered what tests to order if you suspect a parasitic infection or how to interpret urine microscopy results? If you have questions about lab test selection, collection or interpretation that you'd like to see addressed in this newsletter, we would love to know! Email

Diana.Whellams@lifelabs.com to share your ideas.

Mobile Lab Services at LifeLabs

Dal Hundal, Manager, Mobile Lab Services

Mobile lab service is a critical service that LifeLabs provides in British Columbia. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, LifeLabs has experienced an increase in demand for this service. It is important for healthcare providers and patients to be aware of scheduling lead times for this service. LifeLabs is asking healthcare providers to ensure that new and existing mobile lab service requisitions meet the eligibility criteria.

Who Qualifies for Mobile Lab Services

To qualify for mobile lab service, patients must meet the eligibility criteria.

Patients are eligible for in-home collection and specimen pick up if:

- ◆ **They reside in a long-term care facility; or**
- ◆ **They are unable to leave their homes due to physical immobility and/or physical/mental hardship/pain.**

Requisitions for patients in long-term care facilities are prioritized.

Patients who are able drive a motor vehicle, arrange transportation for shopping, banking or other activities or able and/or have returned to work do not meet the eligibility criteria for mobile lab services.

MLS Scheduling Timing

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, LifeLabs' lead time to a scheduled appointment from when a requisition is received has been close to ten business days. Currently, the Interior, Northern and Vancouver Island regions are experiencing longer lead times.

Things You Can Do to Help as a Health Care Provider

LifeLabs is working hard to provide high-quality service and to continue to increase access to laboratory testing. Here is how health care providers can help LifeLabs increase efficiency in delivering critical mobile lab services to new and existing patients requiring this service:

- ◆ Review all existing mobile lab service requisitions for eligibility. Submit changes by fax.
- ◆ Ensure all new mobile lab service requisitions meet the eligibility criteria.
- ◆ Communicate mobile lab scheduling expectations to patients.
- ◆ Refrain from calling the MLS office after faxing requisitions unless otherwise directed by LifeLabs, so we can focus on processing the hundreds of requisitions we receive daily.

MLS Fax Numbers

As a reminder, requisitions must state 'mobile lab' when being sent in, and the fax numbers for MLS requisitions are as follows:

Lower Mainland - 604-939-4257

Vancouver Island & Prince George - 250-881-3116

Kamloops, Kimberly, Terrace, Quesnel - 888-674-0370



Thanks for your help as we strive to meet the needs of patients requiring these services.

A Reminder About After-Hours Coverage

Dr. Romina Reyes, Medical Microbiologist, BC Medical Director, MD, FRCPC

Our laboratory staff may contact health care providers with critical results outside of normal office hours when it's deemed necessary for patient safety. While we are usually able to reach providers, we do occasionally encounter situations where they are unavailable. A recent publication from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC highlights that registrants must make arrangements for after hours coverage:

“College registrants are reminded that providing after-hours (outside of regular office hours) coverage is both a professional and legal imperative. This responsibility is part of the common law duty of care and is outlined in the College’s Care Coverage Outside Regular Office Hours practice standard.”

The complete article can be found here: [Registrar’s message: providing after-hours coverage is not optional; it’s a necessary component of patient care | College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC \(cpsbc.ca\)](#)

If you would like to submit or update your after-hours contact information, please contact our call centre at **1-800-431-7206**. We thank you for your co-operation and dedication to patient care.

Cystic Fibrosis Culture Discontinuation in the Lower Mainland

Dr. Diana Whellams, Medical Microbiologist, MD, FRCPC

Patients with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) are typically followed by physicians in hospital-based clinics, and physicians tend to forward sputum culture testing requests to specific hospitals for consistency of this testing, making it easier for them to follow the complex cultures of CF patients over time.

To align with this ordering approach, we will be moving away from performing sputum culture testing in-house for CF patients. Starting April 1, 2022, any samples from adult CF patients in the lower mainland will be forwarded to the St. Paul’s hospital microbiology lab for culture. Pediatric samples will continue to be forwarded to BC Women and Children’s hospital (as per our existing process).

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Diana Whellams, Medical Microbiologist, at diana.whellams@lifelabs.com.

