

New Testing Panel for Gastrointestinal Pathogens in British Columbia

Dr. Miguel Imperial, Medical Microbiologist, MD, FRCPC

Effective **September 18, 2023**, LifeLabs BC is launching a single, panel-based test, Infectious Diarrhea Panel (IDP) that merges gastrointestinal testing for viral, bacterial, and parasitic pathogens.

The IDP has a broader detection of GI pathogens and increased sensitivity in detecting some organisms. Using one Copan fecal swab, it can detect a standardized set of viral, bacterial, and protozoan pathogens as follows:



- Viruses: Rotavirus A, Norovirus GI/GII, Adenovirus 40/41, Astrovirus
- Bacteria: *Salmonella* species, *Shigella* species, Enteroinvasive *E. coli* (EIEC), *Yersinia enterocolitica* and *pseudotuberculosis*, *Campylobacter jejuni* and *coli*, *Vibrio* species (including toxigenic *Vibrio cholerae*), Shiga toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC), *C. difficile*. (Note - stand-alone *C. difficile* testing is still available independent of the IDP)
- Parasites: *Entamoeba histolytica*, *Cryptosporidium parvum* and *hominis*, *Giardia* species, *Cyclospora cayentanensis*

What This Change Means

This new method of testing will be simpler for healthcare providers and patients as it only requires a single swab whereas the current process requires multiple stool collection containers (see the following page for additional details). Furthermore, this new testing method will report the results of additional pathogens, providing more information to enhance healthcare decision-making.

Note: The IDP does not detect worms (helminths). Worm infection does not generally cause diarrhea. If you suspect a worm infection, please order “Stool Microscopy” by writing this in the “Other Tests” section of the outpatient lab requisition.

For complete details and guidelines on using the IDP, please click here: [Infectious Diarrhea Panel – LifeLabs](#)

New Testing Panel for Gastrointestinal Pathogens in British Columbia... continued

Dr. Miguel Imperial, Medical Microbiologist, MD, FRCPC

Collection Containers

The switch to the IDP for detection of gastrointestinal pathogens comes with a simplification of collection containers, summarized in the chart below. Patient Service Centres will provide information to patients about the container change in the weeks leading up to the IDP implementation.

	C. difficile stand-alone testing	Bacterial culture (C & S)	Ova/parasite testing (O & P)	Viral testing
Current state		 Copan Fecal swab  (Cary Blair also accepted but no longer distributed)		Not routinely performed
Future state (as of September 18) Note – only one fecal swab is required to perform viral, bacterial (including C. difficile), and parasitic testing	 Copan fecal swab  (Clean vial also accepted but no longer distributed)	 Copan fecal swab	 Copan fecal swab  (SAF in select cases for stool microscopy)	 Copan fecal swab

Need More Supplies?

If you require collection devices, please visit [lifelabs.com](https://www.lifelabs.com) and click the heading “Supplies” under the “Healthcare Providers” tab (<https://www.lifelabs.com/healthcare-providers/supplies>) for ordering forms or call the Customer Care Centre at 1-800-431-7206.

For additional questions or concerns, please contact our Customer Care Centre at 1-800-431-7206.

2023 Healthcare Providers' Conference: September 28, 2023, Victoria, B.C.

Dr. Diana Whellams, Medical Microbiologist, MD, FRCPC

Planning for our Healthcare Providers' Conference in Victoria, B.C. continues!

The conference will be held at the beautiful Oak Bay Beach Hotel on the **evening of Thursday, September 28, 2023 from 5:00 to 9:00 PM.**

The evening will begin with a complimentary buffet dinner, followed by short, interactive presentations on lab-related topics, including:

- ◆ *Panel-based testing for infectious diarrhea* - Dr. Robert Liao, PhD, D (ABMM)
- ◆ *An approach to lymphocytosis* - Dr. Peter van den Elzen, MD, FRCPC
- ◆ *Common chemistry tests demystified* - Dr. Joanna Jung, PhD
- ◆ *Testing for drugs of abuse* - Dr. William Schreiber, MD



There will be lots of time for questions and to mix and mingle with the speakers and your colleagues. Spots are limited, so register now by contacting Jolie Quinton at Jolie.Quinton@Lifelabs.com.

We hope to see you there!

***Corynebacterium diphtheriae* toxin testing**

Dr. Diana Whellams, Medical Microbiologist, MD, FRCPC

A recent BCCDC update on toxin testing in *C. diphtheriae* may affect some LifeLabs clients and patients.

Corynebacterium diphtheriae is traditionally a respiratory pathogen causing diphtheria, but may also cause skin and soft tissue infections or colonize wounds as well, a phenomenon somewhat unique to parts of Metro Vancouver, where *C. diphtheriae* is isolated more from wounds than from other anatomic sites. Some isolates of *C. diphtheriae* produce a toxin that can cause systemic complications such as myocarditis or neuropathy; however, a recent review of isolates sent for toxin testing demonstrated that only a handful of B.C. isolates have been toxin-positive over the past 10 years.



As a result, routine toxin testing for *C. diphtheriae* isolates from cutaneous sites is being discontinued provincially. However, isolates from other sites (e.g. sputum) will still be tested, and testing from cutaneous sites can still be requested on an individual basis (e.g. if the patient has traveled to a high-risk area) by contacting the Medical Microbiologist on call.

Additional information about the change in *C. diphtheriae* toxin testing can be found at [Microsoft Word - LAB_LTHD_PHMRL_09.doc \(bccdc.ca\)](#).