

Swabs for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea




Diana Whellams, MD, FRCPC, Medical Microbiologist

The Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections have recently included self-collected vaginal swabs as an option for chlamydia and gonorrhea testing. A summary of swabs used for testing at Lifelabs is provided in table below.

Testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea by nucleic acid amplification (but not culture) can also be performed on first-void urine samples. Patient instructions are available on our website.

Chlamydia culture is not available through Lifelabs.

Testing for Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV), caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis* serovar L1-3, is not routinely performed. However, all rectal swabs that test positive for chlamydia are automatically forwarded to the National Microbiology Laboratory for LGV testing.

<p>Chlamydia/GC Unisex Aptima kit</p> 	<p>Contains two swabs – a white swab for cleaning and a blue swab for sample collection.</p> <p>Can be used to test for chlamydia and gonorrhea by nucleic acid amplification from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physician-collected cervical or urethral swab Physician-collected throat, rectal, or eye swab (non-FDA approved usage: an additional target sequence is tested) <p>Cannot be used for culture of chlamydia or gonorrhea</p>
<p>Chlamydia/GC vaginal Aptima kit</p> 	<p>Contains only one (pink) swab for sample collection</p> <p>Can be used to test for chlamydia and gonorrhea by nucleic acid amplification from physician- or self-collected vaginal swabs</p> <p>Self-collection instructions for patients are available at: http://www.lifelabs.com/sites/content_authoring/patients/Patient%20Test%20Instructions/Swab-CTGC-Self-Collected-Vaginal-Swabs.pdf</p> <p>Cannot be used for culture of chlamydia or gonorrhea</p>
<p>Copan swab</p> 	<p>Can be used to culture gonorrhea from physician-collected cervical, urethral, vaginal, throat, rectal or eye swabs. (These swabs are also used for many other tests.)</p> <p>Cannot be used for chlamydia testing</p>

A Reminder from our Microbiologists

Romina Reyes, MD, FRCPC, Medical Microbiologist

Certain diagnoses or requests affect how the lab processes patient samples, such as prompting additional media set-up or susceptibility testing in Microbiology. When the handwriting isn't clear, the lab has to spend time calling doctors' offices to clarify if what was written is significant. This delays turn-around time for results, especially over weekends and holidays, and compromises patient care as samples also become less viable for additional testing. Please write clearly on requisitions to help the lab minimize delays and contribute to quality patient care.

Misidentified patient specimens also pose a significant safety risk to patients as they may lead to delayed or inappropriate diagnoses

and/or treatments. Please ensure your laboratory requisition and specimen containers are properly filled out and/or labelled with:

- Patient Name
- Patient Gender
- Patient PHN
- Patient Date of Birth
- Ordering Physician Name & Address
- Date/Time of Collection
- Site of Specimen.

Failure to complete the below items may result in specimen being rejected or delayed.

Turnaround Times

For routine testing, hospital laboratories usually offer faster times than community laboratories as hospital samples can be transported and tested within minutes. By contrast, LifeLabs has over 125 collection centers, located across the province from Dawson Creek to Victoria, which rely on a complex network of land, water and air routes to transport specimens to one of our central laboratories.

Our turnaround times for reporting test results are actively monitored against the following targets:

- Most routine Chemistry and Hematology: <12 hrs
- STAT requests: <6hrs
- Serology and urine Chemistry: <24hrs
- Drug testing: screening <24hrs, confirmations <72hrs
- Specialty and Microbiology testing: variable

Should you have questions about our turnaround times, please do not hesitate to contact one of our Medical-Scientific staff.

Critical Results

LifeLabs has a defined policy for calling critical results to the ordering physician as soon as the result is available. As some patients can only visit a collection center later in the day, we are extending our operation to handle all patient samples and so late critical results can sometimes occur. For patient safety, we will call the ordering physician with these results as soon as possible, regardless of the hour. This policy is based on the BCALP Critical Values Consensus Statement of June 2016 which has been endorsed by the College of Physicians of Physicians & Surgeons of British Columbia and the Canadian Medical Protective Association.



Appropriateness of Outpatient Laboratory Testing

When patients are seen in the outpatient environment and clinical assessment indicates a need for more urgent attention with possible hospital admission, it is advisable to send such patients directly to the hospital for acute care services rather than to an outpatient laboratory.

Please note that, effective early 2018, all requests for STAT Troponin or D-Dimer testing will be returned to the patient and the patient directed to the local hospital.

Collecting Partner's Name for Semen Analysis

Clinton Ho, MD, FRCPC, Hematopathologist

At the request of medical clinics, LifeLabs BC and the former BC Biomedical Laboratories have traditionally collected the names of patients' partners when there is a request for semen analysis. This has been to help facilitate data management at the clinics.

Unfortunately, we have decided that our collection of this information is restricted by ethical and privacy guidelines, and carries a remote possibility of a transcription error leading to a potential name mix-up.

Consequently, please be advised that effective November 27, 2017, LifeLabs BC will no longer collect the names of patients' partners when there is a request for semen analysis.

If you have questions or concerns, please phone (604)412-4528 and ask for a hematopathologist.

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