
Laboratory Operational Update

19 June 2020

Collection Centre Update

We are pleased to announce that all collection centres have re-opened with the exception of Hoteo Road (Papatoetoe). Opening hours may not be the same as pre-covid. For the most up to date information, please always visit our website: www.labtests.co.nz. The link to the collection centre information is on the front page. Or follow this link: <https://www.labtests.co.nz/collection-centres/>

Skin scraping for mycology testing

Skin scraping for mycology tests can be performed at our collection centres, however it should be noted that Labtests staff do not perform skin scrapings from the genitalia or groin area. We recommend that skin scrapings for mycology testing from genitalia or groin should be performed by the clinicians at the time they see the patient.

Microbiology Update for Level 1

Clinical details are necessary in order for laboratory scientists and clinical microbiologists to interpret mixed bacterial cultures and provide appropriate reports to referrers. In the community, this is most evident for specimens such as ear swabs and wound swabs that grow multiple organisms which can be pathogenic or commensal depending on the clinical scenario; clinical details for microbiology samples are mandatory throughout many NZ laboratories for this reason.

We appreciate that this may take a few extra moments of your time, but there is an ongoing requirement for provision of clinical details for these specimen types.

Ear swabs

Swabs are not routinely required for the diagnosis or management of otitis externa, where management involves empiric treatment with ear drops and cleaning of the canal (see [regional HealthPathways](#)).

Appropriate indications and clinical details include: Failed empiric treatment, recurrent otitis externa/media with discharge, chronic otitis externa/media with discharge, malignant otitis externa.

Skin/wound swabs

Swabs of chronic ulcers in the absence of acute infection are not helpful and may lead to unnecessary antibiotic use. Appropriate clinical details include: impetigo, boil /abscess, cellulitis with discharge, wound infection, infected ulcer (discharge, redness), infected burns, and recurrent infections with purulent discharge.

Herpes simplex/ Varicella zoster PCR

HSV/VZV PCR continues to be impacted by issues of shared platforms and reagents for COVID-19 testing at Auckland hospital. Clinical details are required in order for testing to occur.

Laboratory testing to investigate suspected chickenpox, shingles, or recurrent HSV is not routinely required.

The following scenarios are most appropriate for testing: antenatal / pregnant patients where there is a risk of congenital transmission, immunocompromised patients, neonates, first diagnosis of HSV of a genital lesion.

For further information contact Auckland Hospital laboratory via Lablink (09) 307-8995 or 0800 522 7587), or: the Virology team virology@adhb.govt.nz
