



Central Zone

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum

To: Nova Scotia Healthcare Providers and Health Service Directors

From: Dr. Bassam Nassar, Medical Director Toxicology Laboratory
Randy Veinotte, Manager Esoteric Laboratories

Date: February 23, 2022

Subject: Screening Toxic Alcohol Testing Requests

Consumption of toxic alcohols is a life-threatening emergency. Toxic alcohols like Methanol and Ethylene glycol are mainly metabolized to formic and glycolic acids respectively, and these metabolites cause organ damage and exert life-threatening effects. Concern about toxic alcohol consumption that necessitates testing for these alcohols and their metabolites should not be requested as routine testing but should rather induce **urgent** and **emergent** testing requests.

This testing will require approval by Clinical Chemistry Medical Staff and will involve discussion of the case. The following parameters should be measured on sample(s) collected simultaneously with samples sent for toxic alcohols testing as this will aid in the discussion:

- Electrolytes for serum sodium concentration
- Serum glucose concentration
- Serum urea concentration
- Serum ethyl alcohol concentration
- Serum osmolality (for calculation of the osmolar gap)
- Anion gap

Clinical Chemistry Medical Staff contact information:

- During daytime working hours (M-F) please contact Dr. Nassar as per below.
- For after hours approval contact the Biochemistry Medical Staff on call via Locating at 902-473-2220

If there are any questions, please contact Dr. Bassam A. Nassar at:

Office Phone: 902-473-2225, Cellular: 902-877-1825 or bassam.nassar@nshealth.ca.