

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum

To: Central Zone Healthcare Providers and Health Service Directors

From: Dr. Manal Elnenaei, Division Chief of Clinical Chemistry, NSH-CZ
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Date: June 17, 2024

Message: Changes to Vitamin D utilization

Effective July 15, 2024, Nova Scotia Health, Central Zone, will implement a utilization rule for vitamin D testing. Vitamin D testing, when clinically necessary, must have the reason clearly stated alongside the test request.

Vitamin D testing should be reserved for patients at very high risk, including those with:

- Osteomalacia (or suspected)
- Osteoporosis
- Chronic liver and kidney disease
- Malabsorption syndromes
- Hypophosphatemia and hypo/hypercalcemia

Requests lacking a clinical justification will be cancelled.

This change, prompted by local stakeholder feedback, aligns with the national 'Using Labs Wisely' collaborative, a part of Choosing Wisely Canada. This initiative seeks to curb the unnecessary use of low-value tests. Choosing Wisely Canada advises against routine vitamin D testing in the general population, noting that:

- Vitamin D deficiency is widespread, especially in countries like Canada during the winter months due to limited sun exposure.
- Over-the-counter vitamin D supplements—or sun exposure when feasible—are more cost-effective and practical than testing and are safe for most healthy individuals. Testing in these instances does not offer additional clinical benefit.

The following link is to a patient information sheet from Choosing Wisely Canada, designed to address any questions patients may have regarding appropriate vitamin D testing.

<https://choosingwiselycanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Vitamin-D-EN.pdf>

For Questions please contact:

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