



Capital Health

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Capital Health Physicians, Clinics, Nova Scotia District Labs and Maritime Provincial Labs

**FROM:** Dr. Todd Hatchette / Dr Jason LeBlanc  
Directors, Virology and Immunology Section

**DATE:** July 14, 2014

**RE:** Changes in Varicella zoster Virus and Adenovirus Testing

---

On July 7, 2014, the Microbiology laboratory changed the way specimens are tested for Varicella zoster virus (VZV) and human adenoviruses (hADV) from culture to molecular testing using PCR. Compared to virus culture, PCR-based detection of these viruses provides more rapid and accurate results.

**Of note:**

- Virus culture had a 14 day turnaround time (TAT) from receipt in lab to a final result. With the change to molecular testing the TAT will be significantly reduced, since testing will now be performed several times a week. For urgent requests, please contact a microbiologist.
- Acceptable specimen types for VZV PCR include cutaneous swabs, cerebral spinal fluids (CSF) and vitreous/aqueous fluids. Processing of CSF requires Director approval.
- For hADV PCR, acceptable specimen types include nasopharyngeal and ocular swabs, respiratory fluids, and corneal scrapings. Detection of hADV from stool is available using different technology.
- Swabs should be viral swabs (same as for Herpes simplex virus detection) placed in universal transport media (UTM) and a sterile container should be used for CSF, tissues and fluids.
- No changes to reports or interpretation are required with this change in methodology.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the laboratory at (473-6881)

Todd Hatchette MD FRCPC  
Room 407B, 5788 University Avenue  
Halifax, NS B3H 1V8  
Tel: 902-473-6885 Fax: 902-473-7971  
todd.hatchette@cdha.nshealth.ca

Jason LeBlanc PhD  
Room 407B, 5788 University Avenue  
Halifax, NS B3H 1V8  
Tel: 902-473-7698 Fax: 902-473-7971  
jason.leblanc@cdha.nshealth.ca

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*