

## *Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum*

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To: Central Zone Physicians and Health Service Directors  
From: Dr. Manal Elnenaei, Service Chief, Division Clinical Chemistry  
Ms. Cindy Andrews, Manager, Core Laboratory  
Ms. Catherine Lambert, Manager, Community Based Laboratories

Date: January 14, 2019

Message: **Discontinuation of Urine Pregnancy Testing in Central Zone Laboratories**

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Effective February 4, 2019 urine testing for pregnancy will be discontinued at all Central Zone laboratories. Quantitative human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) blood testing is available when required to test for or confirm pregnancy, and is the recommended test for the following reasons:

1. The sensitivity of the blood test is higher and can detect pregnancy usually 2-3 days earlier than the urine.
2. Urine concentration varies 15 fold and the ideal sample is a first morning void, which is not always provided. Dilute urine may produce false negative results.
3. There are certain fragmented forms of hCG which may not be reliably detected by the urine test, leading to false negative results in some cases.
4. Excretion of hCG is often decreased in extra uterine pregnancy (ectopic), toxemia of pregnancy or threatened abortion. Such circumstances can yield false negative results particularly in urine samples.
5. Since the blood test is quantitative as opposed to qualitative in urine:
  - a. the blood test is more accurate,
  - b. it is useful to estimate the stage of pregnancy, and
  - c. can help determine whether the rate of increase is consistent with a normal pregnancy.

Please note it is important in any case of suspected pregnancy, that laboratory results are interpreted in conjunction with patient history and clinical findings.

If you have further questions, please contact, Dr. Elnenaei at 902 473 5194