

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum

To: Physicians and Health Service Directors, Central Zone

From: Dr. Todd Hatchette, Chief of Service, Central Zone Microbiology
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Date: April 23, 2021

Subject: **Suspension of Microbiology Testing for COVID-19 Third Wave**

Effective immediately, the Microbiology Laboratory at the QEII HSC will enact our business continuity planning due to an unprecedented increase in demand for services related to COVID-19 testing.

The following services will be suspended until further notice

- Throat swabs for Group A *Streptococcus*
- Routine HSV / VZV swabs for PCR
- Stool testing for viral gastroenteritis
- Oral swabs for fungal culture / stain
- fungal culture for skin, hair and nails
- asymptomatic screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea testing except for prenatal screening

We would encourage our front line clinicians to reduce the use of the following services

Routine Urine cultures

- Do not culture urine in asymptomatic individuals. Asymptomatic bacteriuria should not be treated *except in pregnant women* or prior to an invasive urologic procedure. Most inpatient urine cultures are unnecessary.
- Women with symptoms should be empirically treated with nitrofurantoin. Other options include trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole or fosfomycin and culture reserved for persistent symptoms. See NSH Spectrum App or AMS website for guidance (<https://library.nshealth.ca/ams>)

Skin Swabs

- Avoid swab specimens of superficial ulcers, especially of inadequately debrided wounds

We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for your understanding and cooperation. **If there are circumstance that you believe require any of the above specimens to be processed please call the microbiologist on call to discuss.**