

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum

To: Physicians and Health Service Directors, Nova Scotia Laboratories

From: Dr. Jason LeBlanc, Director, Microbiology- Virology, Immunology & Molecular Section
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Date: March 22, 2019

Subject: **Changes to EBV Viral Load Referred Out Testing**

Effective immediately, Mount Sinai in Toronto has changed the requirements for their Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) Quantitative PCR (viral load) testing. The Altona AltoStar® instrument, together with its associated EBV assay, will replace the current Altona RealStar® EBV assay.

Changes in quantification result:

- The lower limit of quantitation for the AltoStar® EBV PCR is **1.50E+3 IU/mL** (previously 6.00E+2 IU/mL).
- The EBV viral load obtained using the Altona AltoStar® instrument/assay will be, on average, **0.65log₁₀** higher than the value obtained using the current method.

Note: Specimen collection requirements are unchanged.
Collect one lavender top 4 mL EDTA tube.

Change in specimen processing requirements:

- The specimen should **not** be centrifuged. Testing now requires EDTA **whole blood** transported at 2-7°C.
- If specimen transport occurs > 24 hours after collection, 2 mL of whole blood should be aliquoted and frozen at -20°C for transport/storage.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the laboratory at 902-473-6881, Dr. LeBlanc at 902-473-7698, or Jimmy MacDonald at 902-473-5528.