Dr. Wendy Wells, MD, Chair, Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, requests the following Clinical Laboratory update be distributed to MDs, PAs, House Staff, Nursing staff, and Regional Clients.

**From:** Isabella Martin, MD, Medical Director of Microbiology

 Nisalda Carreiro, Microbiology Supervisor

**To:** All DH providers (physicians, associate providers and GME)

**Subject: Diagnosis of VZV infection - Replacement of viral culture and rapid staining with qualitative PCR-based methods**

The microbiology laboratory will no longer perform viral culture for varicella zoster virus (VZV) or the VZV rapid stain test.

We will instead perform **qualitative** PCR testing in-house for VZV on dermal (lesion) specimens.

Other sample types, such as sterile body fluids will be sent to our reference laboratory Mayo Medical Laboratories for qualitative VZV PCR.

This decision is dictated by significantly higher sensitivity of molecular methods for viral diagnostics.

Specimen sources appropriate for testing include the following:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Specimen Sources** | **Minimum Specimen Volume** | **Container** | **Replacement Test eDH Order** |
| **Dermal (lesion)** | Swab | Swab in viral transport media | VZV PCR (Dermal)LAB4231(in-house) |
| **CSF** | 0.5 mL | Sterile container | VZV PCR (CSF)LAB3710(send-out) |
| **Other Sterile Fluids**(Pleural, peritoneal, ascites, amniotic or ocular) | 0.5 mL | Sterile container | Miscellaneous LabLAB3715(send-out) |
| **Tissue**(brain, colon, kidney, liver, lung etc.) | 2x2mm biopsy, fresh | Sterile container with sterile saline |
| **Respiratory**(bronchial washing, BAL, nasopharyngeal aspirate or washing, sputum or tracheal aspirate) | 1.5 mL | Sterile container |

This change in testing methodology was implemented on March 10th,2020.

Any questions can be directed to Ella Martin, MD at isabella.w.martin@hitchcock.org or 603.650.7171.

**Date:** March 13, 2020