

Provincial Laboratory Services



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Health PEI
One Island Health System

Hepatitis A Testing Issues and Future Restrictions

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This information applies to: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Public Health Nursing and Employee Health

From: Dr. Greg German, Division Head of Microbiology Services, Health PEI

Hepatitis A serology is frequently ordered unnecessarily to confirm hepatitis A immunity. This practice is not supported by the 2016 Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) guidelines or by local experts. Interestingly, this appears to be a practice challenge limited to Canada. Health PEI tests over 1,200 a year.

Unfortunately, the manufactures of the test kits for Hepatitis A IgM and IgG has had two recalls of their product. This has left about 81 test results requiring repeat testing. These 81 reports have now been corrected to reflect the recall, and request for repeat testing. It is unlikely that this has directly affected a patient.

With the exception of the 81 repeat tests requested above, Provincial Laboratory Services will be restricting the use of Hepatitis A serology so that it will be limited to the diagnosis of past or current hepatitis. Therefore testing will be limited to:

- Ordered by paediatrics, public health, internal medicine or infectious diseases
- Ordered on emergency room patients or inpatients
- For other situations please add rationale for testing and check "consult microbiologist" on the requisition form and this will be considered on a case by case basis

In the rare instances where Hep A status is required for travel in immunocompromised or partially immunized patients, serology is unlikely to be processed without a patient incurring a fee from Health PEI as testing for travel medicine is not covered under the province's medical care.

If there are any questions regarding the recall or the test restrictions please contact my office at 902-894-2439.

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