



Community Laboratory Service Update: Monkeypox Testing

June 2022

Communication to:

Ontario healthcare providers in the community assessing patients for Monkeypox infection or submitting samples for testing, which have been collected from a person with possible, suspected, or confirmed Monkeypox infection.

Background:

Beginning in May 2022, several countries have declared Monkeypox outbreaks following a number of unexpected local transmission events, including apparent human-to-human spread. This memo aims to inform healthcare providers of the sample submission process from patients with possible, suspected, or confirmed Monkeypox infection.

Monkeypox Testing:

Community laboratories in Ontario do not currently offer diagnostic testing for Monkeypox infection. Please refer to your local Public Health Laboratory if you have questions regarding testing eligibility, specimen collection, or transportation.

Routine (Non-Monkeypox) Diagnostic Testing from Patients with Possible, Suspected, or Confirmed Monkeypox Infection:

Due to the unique infection prevention and control (IPAC) protocols required to manage Monkeypox cases, we are requesting that healthcare providers refrain from directing patients with confirmed Monkeypox infection to community specimen collection centers for sample collection. Patients with confirmed Monkeypox infection should not be directed to specimen collection centers until all lesions have crusted over or the patient has otherwise been cleared for testing by public health.

Community specimen collection centers **do not** offer collection services for diagnosing Monkeypox infection (e.g., lesions, throat, or nasopharyngeal swabs). However, centers will support collection of serum or urine samples if urgent testing is required and only from possible or suspected Monkeypox cases (i.e., not from confirmed cases). If sample collection is required from possible or suspected Monkeypox cases healthcare providers are required to first contact the local specimen collection center to confirm that they can accommodate the collection and to arrange an appointment to ensure IPAC protocols are adhered to. Please call your respective laboratories for guidance about where to send your patients and when to send them:

Dynacare Customer Care: 1-800-565-5721, or your Dynacare Account Manager.

LifeLabs Customer Care Centre: 1-877-849-3637

Bio-Test Laboratories: 1-613-789-4242



Medical Laboratories of Windsor: 1-519-258-1991

Med-Health Laboratories: 1-416-256-7278

Alpha Laboratories: 1-416-449-2166 x1386 – Customer Service
1-416-449-2166 x1262 – Robert Scheuermann, Director Quality

Community laboratories will continue to monitor provincial and federal guidance to make sure they continue to adhere to the most updated Infection Control measures

Transport of Samples Collected from Patients with Possible, Suspected, or Confirmed Monkeypox Infection

While community laboratory couriers are trained in Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) practices, they will not be able to support observations of physicians packaging samples. Couriers are trained in sample packaging; however, they do not regularly package specimens and are responsible only for confirming packaging is suitable for transport, that the correct labeling is in place, and that the necessary documentation is completed as per TDG. The submitting healthcare provider is responsible for the packing of their own samples. If submitters are not trained in TDG, they are directed to refer to provincial and federal guidance for appropriate collection of samples. We cannot support training or observation of sample packaging.

Community laboratory couriers will support the transport of specimens collected from possible, suspected, or confirmed Monkeypox infected patients, if packaged appropriately by the submitting healthcare practitioner, and will ensure the TU 0886 certificate is affixed to the external package. Upon arrival at the clinics, couriers will be instructed to ask if there are any possible Monkeypox samples, and to ensure the correct package and label are used. If there is not an opportunity to inform the courier of the package contents prior to shipping, the submitter must ensure that the package is clearly labelled as containing samples for Monkeypox testing. If packaged or labeled incorrectly, couriers will reject the package. Specimens packaged incorrectly will not be transported.

Community laboratories are committed to providing the highest quality and value to clients. We look forward to working with you as we implement this change. If you have inquiries, please contact your respective test service provider.

References:

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/laboratory-biosafety-biosecurity/pathogen-safety-data-sheets-risk-assessment/monkeypox-virus.html>
2. <https://ipac-canada.org/monkey-pox>