

DATE:	10 November 2025
TO:	Physicians and Healthcare Providers in High Level, Fort Vermilion and LaCrete
FROM:	Clinical Biochemistry, Alberta Precision Laboratories
RE:	Implementation of Ammonia at High Level Laboratory

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Key Message

- Effective November 13, 2025, Ammonia testing will be implemented on the Vitros XT3400 at Northwest Health Centre (High Level). Currently this testing is referred to Edmonton Base Lab. This implementation will improve turn around time and decrease the number of tests being cancelled due to extended transport times.

Background

- Ammonia is not a stable compound and needs to remain frozen throughout transport for adequate results. In looking at North Zone data, samples from this area of the province are cancelled due to thawing in transport up to 35% of the time compared to 6% in other North Zone non-performing sites.

How this will impact you

- There are no changes to ordering. Samples collected in Fort Vermilion and LaCrete will route to High Level instead of Edmonton Base Lab for testing.
- Reference intervals will change with the change in methodology.

Age	Current Reference Interval (µmol/L)	New Reference Interval (µmol/L)
0 – 3 months	3 – 100	< 85
3 months – 16 years	20 – 50	≤ 30
≥ 17 years	20 – 50	≤ 30

- Critical values are unchanged.
- When testing is performed on a Vitros analyzer, ammonia results are underestimated if glucose results are ≥ 33.3 mmol/L. Ammonia orders will trigger the addition of a glucose order. The following result comment will accompany ammonia results when glucose results are ≥ 33.3 mmol/L:
 “Ammonia results are underestimated when glucose results are ≥ 33.3 mmol/L. Interpret result with caution and recollect after treatment of hyperglycemia if clinically appropriate.”

Action Required

- Be aware of the change in methodology and reference intervals. Turnaround time will be significantly decreased so review of results can be expedited.

Effective November 13, 2025

Questions/Concerns

- Dr. Kaila Crawford, Associate Medical Director (Rural), North Sector, kaila.crawford@aplabs.ca

Approved by

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