

DATE:	8 December 2025
TO:	Calgary Zone Healthcare Providers at: Didsbury District Health Services, High River General Hospital, and Strathmore District Health Services
FROM:	Clinical Biochemistry, Alberta Precision Labs
RE:	Appropriate Utilization of the Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) for Colorectal Cancer Screening and Referral of Fecal Occult Blood Test from Calgary Zone Rural Laboratories to Foothills Medical Centre Laboratory

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Key Message

- Effective December 9, 2025, samples for the guaiac Fecal Occult Blood (gFOBT) test currently performed at the below identified Calgary Zone rural sites will be referred to Foothills Medical Centre (FMC) Laboratory for testing.
 - Sites: Didsbury District Health Services, High River General Hospital, Strathmore District Health Services

Background

- In November 2013, the Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) replaced the gFOBT and average-risk screening colonoscopy as the primary screening modality for colorectal cancer (CRC) in average risk individuals. The FIT is superior to the gFOBT for several reasons: better clinical performance, higher sensitivity, and simplified sampling process for the individual.
- A Laboratory Bulletin was circulated in November 2014 informing Physicians and Nursing staff of the changes to the screening test for CRC in community patients. This bulletin also outlines the patient population in which the FIT is considered clinically appropriate.
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/wf/lab/wf-lab-bulletin-fit-discontinuation-of-fobt.pdf>
- New Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations do not recommend performing point of care testing (POCT) fecal occult blood tests for suspected gastrointestinal bleed in the Emergency Department or acute care setting: [Clinical Biochemistry Recommendations: POCT](#)
- gFOBT has very low volume at these sites, and this change supports more efficient use of resources.

How this will impact you

- If ordered, gFOBT testing will only be completed at the FMC lab site. This routing may lead to an increase in result turnaround time.

Action Required

- Referral testing for gFOBT should be discontinued. The FIT should only be used for CRC screening in the appropriate patient population. Patients with signs or symptoms indicating possible gastrointestinal pathology should be investigated and referred for consultation.

Questions/Concerns

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Approved by

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