

DATE:	8 December 2025
TO:	Medicine Hat Regional Hospital and South Zone East Rural Healthcare Providers
FROM:	Clinical Biochemistry, Alberta Precision Laboratories
RE:	Implementation of Standardized Reporting for Body Fluid Crystals

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Key Message

- Effective December 11th, 2025, changes to Body Fluid Crystal reporting will be implemented for testing performed at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.
- New results are as follows:
 - POSITIVE for crystals. Positively- birefringent rhomboid crystals consistent with calcium pyrophosphate dihydrate (pseudogout).
 - NEGATIVE for gout and pseudogout crystals. Crystal-like forms present which may be cholesterol, calcium oxalate, steroids, lithium heparin precipitate, dry EDTA, talc or collagen fibers.
 - Other – a description will be provided in the Comments box for the result.
- New interpretive comments are as follows:
 - For specimens with a testing volume less than 0.25 mL - The sample was not centrifuged due to low volume. Positive results are valid, but a negative result should be interpreted with caution due to the potential for a false negative.

Background

- This change is part of a large-scale provincial standardization effort for body fluid crystal analysis to ensure consistent and accurate results at all laboratories across Alberta. As part of this standardization, Body Fluid Crystal testing will move from the Microbiology department to the Chemistry department at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, and they will follow the new provincial procedure.

How this will impact you

- Be aware that results will include additional crystal identification information, as outlined above.

Action Required

- No action is required.
- There are no changes to specimen collection requirements or Epic ordering information.

Questions/Concerns

- Dr. Megan Brown, Regional Site Chief, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, 403-529-8830

Approved by

- Dr. Allison Venner, Clinical Biochemistry Section Chief, South Sector, APL
- Dr. Megan Brown, Regional Site Chief, Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, APL