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Laboratory Bulletin

DATE:	22 July 2026
TO:	All Healthcare Providers
FROM:	Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) – Provincial Public Health Laboratory (Public Health Lab)
RE:	**Mycoplasma/Ureaplasma Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT)**

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Key Message

- A nucleic acid test (NAT) for *Mycoplasma genitalium*, *Mycoplasma hominis*, *Ureaplasma urealyticum*, and *Ureaplasma parvum* will be implemented at the Alberta Provincial Public Health Laboratory (Public Health Lab), enabling testing to be performed in province.
- Routine *Mycoplasma/Ureaplasma* culture will be discontinued.
- Requests for *Mycoplasma/Ureaplasma* NAT will no longer be referred out of province.
- **A dedicated specimen** for *Mycoplasma/Ureaplasma* NAT will be required
- This testing will begin in a staged approach based on specimen source.
    - Effective **July 23, 2026 – Genital and urine specimens**
    - Effective **August 10, 2026 – All other accepted specimens**
- Testing will follow **Canadian national guidelines** for NAT testing, with **strict clinical criteria applied** [1].
    - Asymptomatic screening of M. genitalium is **not recommended** or accepted

Background

- The National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, has historically provided genital *Mycoplasma/Ureaplasma* NAT testing for Alberta with a turnaround time of 20 calendar days.
- The Allplex/Novaplex™ STI Essential Assay is a multiplex real-time PCR assay that detects seven organisms [2][3]. Only the four targets listed in the Key Messages will be reported, as testing pathways are currently in place for the other targets.
- The Public Health Lab has completed a comprehensive validation of the assay at the South Health Campus site in Calgary.

Testing Criteria and Clinical Indications

- Testing will adhere strictly to **Canadian national guidelines** as outlined by the Public Health Agency of Canada [1].
- NAT for *M. genitalium*, *M. hominis*, *U.* urealyticum and *U. parvum* is indicated in the following scenarios:
    - Patients with persistent or recurrent urethritis, cervicitis, vaginitis, or pelvic inflammatory disease, using urine or genital swabs AND
        - Negative results for gonorrhea and chlamydia are required before testing

        - For patients with a vagina, negative results for bacterial vaginosis, yeast, and *Trichomonas vaginalis* are also required
    - Lung transplant patients being screened for hyperammonemia syndrome with bronchoscopy specimens
    - Islet cell transplant-related sterility testing
    - Patients with suspected disseminated disease, invasive infections, or other syndromes due to genital *Mycoplasma* or *Ureaplasma* (e.g., bronchopulmonary dysplasia in newborns) may also qualify for testing; however, these requests will be reviewed by the Public Health Laboratory Microbiologist/Virologist on-call (Public Health Lab MVOC)

Acceptable Specimen Types

- **Effective July 23rd, 2026**
    - Genital swabs (e.g. vaginal, cervical, or urethral); submitted in viral/universal transport medium or Aptima Multitest/Unisex medium)
    - Urine (minimum 1 mL in a sterile container)
    - Rectal swab (in viral/universal transport medium or APTIMA multitest medium)
- **Effective August 10th, 2026**
    - Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) and bronchial wash (BW) – 1 mL in a sterile container (minimum 0.5 mL)
    - Tissues
    - Islet cell sterility specimens
    - Other specimen types may be accepted after consultation with the Public Health Lab MVOC (e.g., upper respiratory tract swabs in Universal Transport Medium, tracheal aspirate, sputum, etc.) but are considered non-validated and will be reported as such.
- **Collection and Transport**
    - Use appropriate swab types; flocked swabs preferred.
    - Submit specimens in the appropriate transport medium or collection device
    - Transport specimens to an APL laboratory or collection site as soon as possible.
- **Ordering Process**
    - **EPIC/Connect Care users**: Order **Mycoplasma/Ureaplasma NAT** with all mandatory fields completed.
    - **Paper requisition users**: Use the designated APL Serology and Molecular Testing Requisition form (https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-20676.pdf).
        - **Indicate "Mycoplasma/Ureaplasma NAT" and mandatory clinical information** within the "Specify Other Serology and Molecular Tests" box:
            - **Clinical indication:** Specify the exact clinical scenario (e.g., "persistent urethritis after treatment for chlamydia/gonorrhea with negative test of cure")
            - **Previous testing results:** Document prior testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea with dates and results

    - **Treatment history:** Indicate what antimicrobial therapy was administered and when
    - **Symptom duration:** Specify onset and duration of symptoms
  - Requests lacking adequate clinical justification will be cancelled
- **Resistance Testing**
  - When clinically indicated, resistance testing can be requested by contacting the Public Health Laboratory Microbiologist/Virologist on-call (Public Health Lab MVOC)

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to

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- Dr Hong Zhou, Medical Microbiologist, Provincial Public Health Laboratory, APL (hong.zhou@aplabs.ca)
- Dr Nathan Zelyas, Medical Microbiologist, Provincial Public Health Laboratory, APL (nathan.zelyas@aplabs.ca)

Approved by

- Dr. Graham Tipples, Medical/Scientific Director, Provincial Public Health Laboratory, APL

References

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2021). Mycoplasma Genitalium: Screening and diagnostic testing. Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections. https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/sexual-health-sexually-transmitted-infections/canadian-guidelines
2. Mbanga, J., Griessel, R., & Cuyler, H. (2023). Allplex STI Essential Assay - Sexually Transmitted Infections. *PMC*, 10(6). https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10686431/
3. Seegene Inc. Reproductive tract Infections https://www.seegene.com/products/assays
4. APL Guide to Services: www.albertahealthservices.ca/lab