



Memo to: Healthcare Personnel  
From: Alverno Clinical Laboratories, Department of Molecular Diagnostics/Flow Cytometry  
Subject: **May 31, 2009 - Herpes Simplex Virus Testing**

In an effort to provide the highest quality testing available, Alverno Clinical Laboratories will discontinue Herpes Simplex Virus 1/2 cultures on May 31, 2009. This service will be replaced by a PCR assay which detects and types HSV 1 & 2.

- ◆ PCR is quickly becoming the gold standard for HSV detection. PCR is especially helpful in differentiating herpes simplex encephalitis (HSV1) from herpes simplex meningitis (HSV2).
- ◆ PCR offers greater sensitivity, more accurate typing, and a faster turnaround time 7 days a week.
- ◆ Specimens will be frozen for 2 months if further testing is desired.
- ◆ All positive spinal fluid specimens are repeated for confirmation and then called as an alert.

HSV-1 causes oral lesions in approximately 80% of cases and genital lesions in 20% of cases. The reverse is true for HSV-2, which causes genital lesions in 80% and oral lesions in 20%. Herpes viruses cause a wide range of diseases including gingivostomatitis, keratoconjunctivitis, encephalitis, genital disease, and newborn infection. HSV infections are spread via respiratory droplets or direct exposure to infected saliva, or via genital contact.

### **SPECIMEN COLLECTION**

\* All specimens previously submitted for culture are acceptable for PCR testing.

Collect and submit swabs in viral transport medium. Body fluids may also be submitted in a sterile container. No wooden or calcium-alginate swabs

EDTA plasma, whole blood, and serum are acceptable. No sodium heparin tubes.

Unacceptable Conditions: non-sterile or leaking containers; vesicular lesions that are cleaned by using alcohol or detergents; collections with dry swabs, wooden shaft swabs, or calcium alginate swabs. These may lead to erroneous PCR results.

Swab and body fluid stability - Room Temperature: 48 hours, Refrigerated: 7 days, Frozen: 30 days

Whole blood - Room Temperature: 48 hours, Refrigerated: 7 days

Serum/Plasma - Room Temperature: 48 hours, Refrigerated: 7 days, Frozen: 30 days

The Soft order code is **HSVP**.

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