

LABORATORY COVID-19 RESPONSE

1 April 2020

Reduction in Non-Essential Laboratory Test Requests

Stay home. Save lives. This is the advice we need everyone to follow.

Over the past week we have had many people attend our collection centres for tests which could have been deferred. For example yesterday we had a toenail mycology request from a patient who has had bad toe nails for a year...

We are mindful of keeping our patients and staff well, particularly our frontline phlebotomists.

We ask all clinicians to immediately reconsider, or reduce, the frequency of laboratory tests that are non-essential, discretionary, routine, or could be delayed.

In addition, we ask that **clinical details are routinely provided on all requests for laboratory services.**

Community Collection Centres

To find a list of collection centres that are currently open please go to www.bloodtests.co.nz or www.canterburyscl.co.nz. As the situation changes these websites will be regularly updated.

Patient Screening at Collection Centres

When a patient presents at a collection centre they will be asked a series of screening questions such as travel history, contact with a known COVID positive patient and if they have any cold or flu symptoms. If they answer YES to any of these questions, they will not be admitted to the collection centre. The patient will be asked to leave and to call their referrer for advice regarding their requested test.

Please DO NOT SEND any patients to a collection centre who has cold or flu like symptoms, in particular a fever, dry cough, shortness of breath or sore throat.

The screening questions are used to minimise the risk of COVID 19 for our patients and staff.

If you have a patient who has travelled recently, has had contact with a COVID 19 positive case or who has cold and flu like symptoms AND requires a blood collection that CANNOT be deferred, please call us on [03 359 0900](tel:033590900) to discuss.

Home visit collection services

The home visit service is a finite resource, please ensure this service is only used for its intended purpose which is to provide testing for patients who are **unable to come** into a collection centre and where testing is **clinically urgent**.



Please defer any request for testing that is not immediately urgent in both isolated patients and the normal community population.

To request a new Homevisit, please fill out the Homevisit request form found on our website <https://www.canterburyscl.co.nz/clinicians/home-visit-guidelines>

For patients who have been asked to self-isolate based on their travel history or contact with suspected or confirmed cases we may provide a home visit **if urgently required**. Please call us on **03 359 0900** to discuss. Our staff will be required to wear full PPE for these types of visits.

All home visit patients will be contacted before their visit and have the same screening questions asked as patients who present at a collection centre. If a patient answers YES to a screening question the request will be discussed with a pathologist before the home visit can be arranged.

Each referrer will have to decide for themselves how best to advise their patients who are vulnerable but do not meet criteria for a home visit. Please call us on **03 359 0900** to discuss any patients of concern.

How to make a laboratory request after a remote consult

Where a laboratory request form is required for a patient you have seen remotely, and the patient is unable to collect a hard copy before presenting for their laboratory test, please email the form (indicating which collection centre they are to attend) to labrequest@sclabs.co.nz

Courier service

If your Medical Centre is closed and you no longer require routine laboratory courier collections, please let us know by emailing the details to csclcouriers@sclabs.co.nz.

If your Medical centre does not require a regular laboratory courier service you can utilise our on-call courier service by calling **03 359 0900**

If you do require your regular routine laboratory courier service you do not need to do anything at this time. We will continue our regular courier service as required.

If you have a Drop Box we recommend you use this for regular courier pickups, this will minimise the number of Medical Centres our couriers need to enter.

If you have any questions please contact us either via our website <https://www.canterburyscl.co.nz/contact-us> or by calling **03 359 0900**

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea".

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