



Technical Bulletin

Pneumococcus Testing by Rapid Antigen Compliments Laboratory Approach to Community-Acquired Pneumonia (CAP) and Meningitis

TO: Medical Staff and Clients

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DATE: March 29, 2019

SUBJECT: **Rapid antigen testing for *Streptococcus pneumoniae* compliments respiratory and CSF culture**

Streptococcus pneumoniae is an important cause of community acquired pneumonia (CAP) and meningitis, and the laboratory diagnosis may be delayed because of the need for overnight culture incubations and/or a lack of viability. Diagnostic Laboratory Services is pleased to announce the availability of a rapid antigen test (Alere BinaxNOW®) that can be performed on urine or CSF as a compliment to culture. Both tests should be considered for several reasons:

1. Neither CAP nor meningitis is limited to *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.
2. False positive **urine** antigen tests can occur:
 - a. Due to nasopharyngeal carriage of *S. pneumoniae*, especially in children.
 - b. As a result of recent pneumococcal vaccination (past 5 days).
 - c. Urinary tract infection.
 - d. Pulmonary mycobacterial infection.
3. True positives are not always confirmed because *S. pneumoniae* undergoes autolysis and culture is sometime unsuccessful.

Effective 15 April, 2019, testing will be performed in-house at the Central Microbiology Laboratory.

Test code: 5894
Test name: Strep pneumoniae Ag, Urine or CSF
Preferred container: Sterile plastic leak-proof container
Optimal volume: 1-3 mL
Specimen stability: Urine: Ambient: 1 Day; Refrigerated: 14 Days; Frozen: 14 Days
CSF: Ambient: 1 Day; Refrigerated: 7 Days; Frozen: 7 Days
TAT: 1 day
Effective: April 15, 2019

Please refer any questions to Terrie Koyamatsu, Manager - DLS Microbiology Laboratory at 589-5196, or DLS Client Services at 589-5101.
