

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Memorandum

To: Central Zone Healthcare Providers and Health Service Directors

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Date: June 3, 2024

Message: Update to Guidance for appropriate requesting of Fecal Calprotectin testing

This update includes direction related to the Gut-link Smartpath requisition.

Effective June 17, 2024 fecal calprotectin requests will only be approved by Central Zone (CZ) laboratories for patients in whom the evidence-based lower GI symptom care pathway, Gut-Link Smartpath, has been followed **and an approved Gut-Link Smartpath requisition generated**. The Smartpath is accessible through the Virtual Hallway platform (<https://virtualhallway.ca>). *Do not instruct the patient to collect the sample prior to obtaining the Gut-Link Smartpath requisition. Only samples received with this Gut-Link Smartpath requisition will be processed.*

The original memorandum dated April 19, 2024 included an alternative process by requesting a GUT-Link GI specialist telephone consultation through GI central triage (902 473-7833). While this consultation may be helpful for patient management and related issues, **it will not however, generate the required Gut-link requisition**. The Gastroenterologist may choose to order it on your behalf if clinically necessary.

Notes:

Calprotectin is a protein released by activated neutrophils when there is intestinal inflammation. This calprotectin then enters the lumen of the gut and elevated levels can be found in feces. High levels of fecal calprotectin (FC) can therefore distinguish inflammatory bowel disease from irritable bowel disease in conjunction with other diagnostic modalities such as endoscopy.

An elevated FC can however be found in other conditions that cause inflammation of the intestinal lining e.g., gastrointestinal infections, celiac disease and other malabsorptive conditions. Therefore, to ensure appropriate testing and interpretation of FC, and to avoid unnecessary referrals, the Division of Digestive Care and Endoscopy has developed an evidence-based algorithm for investigating chronic lower GI symptoms (Gut-Link Smartpath) to determine which patients would benefit from this testing.

For Questions/ concerns, please contact:

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