

Guidelines for Laboratory Testing

Laboratory specimens are critical items to monitor for patients suspected of Viral Hemorrhagic Disease, as contact with bodily fluids is a method of transmission for these pathogens. In light of recent events, Laboratory has crafted the following guidelines to answer common questions regarding all types of lab testing for these patients.

How do we arrange for any labs that need to be drawn on these patients?

When a patient meets criteria to initiate the hospital Ebola protocol, the Laboratory must be immediately informed. This may be accomplished by calling your facility laboratory. Blood draws and testing will be coordinated between laboratory and caregivers in the isolation room. Phlebotomists will not enter the room. All personnel collecting patient specimens of any type must wear treatment Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

What tests are available?

1. Point of Care (POC): POC tests are the preferred method of testing in these patients. Any point of care tests available in the current test menu for each facility will be offered. Point of care platforms such as the iSTAT and Glucometers will be dedicated to those patients and will remain in the isolation room with the patient for the duration of that isolation stay. Point of care testing will be performed in the isolation room or anteroom. Laboratory will take ownership of the point of care devices when isolation is broken, and will follow CDC guidelines for disposal of all supplies and disinfection of reusable equipment.
2. Non Point of Care tests (all other tests): Requests for these tests must be communicated to laboratory leadership and approved by the attending critical care or infectious disease physicians and institutional CLIA license holder or designee. All non-POC testing will be done as a send out test. Call your laboratory for clarification.
3. Diagnostic Ebola Testing: Please follow "Ebola Algorithm: Decision to Test" Guidelines
4. Blood Transfusions: All blood transfusions will be administered as uncrossmatched blood products. No type and screens will be performed. Rare exceptions for transfusion with blood products for treatment purposes (i.e. with antibodies) must be approved by the attending infectious disease or critical care physicians and the institutional CLIA license holder or designee. This testing is only available as a send out test.

How will the specimen be moved from the patient's isolation room ?

For specimens that must leave the isolation room, properly trained laboratory personnel will assist with transfer of specimens to a container that is properly rated and decontaminated for transport outside of the isolation room.

Specimens are to be double bagged, placed in a rigid transport container, and hand carried to its destination. Do not send specimens through the pneumatic tube. Please do not remove specimens from the isolation room without approval from laboratory leadership.

For 24 hour assistance, call your Facility Laboratory and/or On Call Pathologist.