

August 11, 2011

Announcing Change in Urine Culture Reporting

As a quality and process improvement measure, the Methodist microbiology laboratory will be making changes to the reporting of urine culture results, effective September 1st.

Previously, all urine cultures (including those likely to be contaminated) were reported with each organism identified to at least the genus level. It is not cost-effective for a laboratory to provide definitive workup of contaminated cultures because repeat cultures yield more accurate results. Inappropriate reporting of contaminated urine culture results may lead to incorrect therapy, increased costs, and poor patient outcomes.

Urine cultures with mixed growth indicative of contamination or with only non-pathogens present will be reported with one of the following comments:

- “Organism present is suggestive of urogenital contamination.”
- “Mixed flora, suggestive of contamination. Repeat culture, if indicated.”
- “Three or more isolates > 10,000 cfu/mL present suggesting probable contamination. Repeat culture, if indicated.”

The IDs of individual organisms present in cultures that fall into one of the above categories will no longer be reported automatically. If you wish to request additional workup of individual isolates from a culture reported with one of the above comments, please call the pathology department at (402)354-4541.

REFERENCES:

LG Bekeris, Jones BA, Walsh MK, Wagar EA. *Urine Culture Contamination: A College of American Pathologists Q-Probes Study of 127 Laboratories*. Arch Pathol Lab Med. Vol 132, June 2008

For questions or comments, contact Dr. Tess Karre at (402) 354-7842.