



Global Blood Collection Tube Shortage

Recommendations from the UofT
LMP Quality Council



Disruptions in global supply chains due to COVID-19 have resulted in global supply constraints related to blood collection tubes. Supply constraints for blood collection tubes are expected to stabilize in the coming months. However, current shortages are impacting all healthcare organizations and there is a need for immediate action to conserve tubes. Suggested conservation strategies are below.

OPTIMIZE

For Clinicians

- Do not order non-essential laboratory tests; critically assess the potential for a test result to impact immediate patient care before ordering.
- Avoid blood work in stable or asymptomatic outpatients.
- Avoid blood work in alternate level of care patients.
- Do not order routine standing orders and consider cancelling unnecessary standing orders.
- Do not perform annual screening blood tests unless directly indicated by the risk profile of the patient.
- Consider reviewing or pausing medical directives, order sets and order panels in clinical areas where blood work is drawn routinely (e.g. Emergency Department).
- Refer to Choosing Wisely Canada recommendations for appropriate test utilization guidance for specific clinical situations.

For Laboratorians

- Laboratory medicine departments should consider validation of alternative blood collection tubes and supplies.
- Consider reviewing blood draw practices with local stakeholders to identify opportunities to reduce blood draws.
- Consider partnering with local laboratories to share supplies and off-set respective critical shortages.

This document was developed by the Laboratory Utilization Working Group of the Quality Council, Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology, University of Toronto.

CONSOLIDATE

For Clinicians

- Review previous laboratory test results including point-of-care test results that may have already included the test of interest, for e.g., glucose meter checks and electrolytes on blood gas analyzers.
- Whenever possible, add-on tests to existing blood draws.

For Phlebotomists and Laboratorians

- Follow laboratory guidelines on grouping tests on single tubes to make the most efficient use of tubes and collection.

COMMUNICATE

For all

- Engage with local laboratory medicine and procurement teams to gain awareness of the status of supplies, recommended usage, and validated alternatives.
- Ask your hospital or community laboratory for clarification on unnecessary tests and procedures.
- Connect with your local data analytics team to consider feasibility of development of a blood collection tube dashboard to best track supply and demand, send alerts, help inform the feasibility and safety of clinical care ramp up based on blood tube availability.

Choosing Wisely Canada

Conserving lab resources in primary care (PDF)

Conserving lab resources in hospitals (PDF)

References

- [Ontario Association of Medical Laboratories](#)
- [Choosing Wisely Canada](#)
- [Ontario Association of Medical Laboratories](#)
- [Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists \(CSCC\)](#)
- [Canadian Association of Medical Biochemists \(CAMB\)](#)