

# Memorandum

**To:** Northwell Health Laboratories Clients



**From:** Dwayne Breining, M.D., Executive Director, Northwell Health Laboratories

**Date:** July 17, 2024

**Re:** Updated Guidelines for the Collection and Ordering of Blood Cultures due to Global Shortage of Blood Culture Bottles



Due to an ongoing global shortage of Blood Culture bottles Northwell Health has implemented updated guidelines for the collection and ordering of Blood Cultures. These guidelines will help to ensure the most judicious use of the existing supply of Blood Culture bottles and are intended to focus on Blood Culture ordering in clinical situations where culture results are most likely to affect patient management.

**Please refer to tables below for the updated guidelines for the collection and ordering of initial and follow-up Blood Cultures**

Initial Blood Culture Collection	
	
<b>Do NOT Check Blood Cultures for:</b>	<b>Collect Two Blood Culture Sets for:</b>
Isolated fever without shaking chills	Severe sepsis or septic shock
Uncomplicated cystitis and prostatitis, non-severe community-acquired pneumonia, and non-severe cellulitis	Neutropenia with fever and febrile illnesses in immunocompromised patients
Isolated leukocytosis	High-acuity illnesses like meningitis, endocarditis, septic arthritis, and vascular graft infections
Asymptomatic patients with a central line	Fever in a patient with central venous catheter
Post-operative fever within 48 hours of surgery	Fever in an infant

**Remember to follow these best practices:**

- Always draw **two** Blood Culture sets— a single set is not optimal.
- Avoid false-positive results due to skin contamination by strictly adhering to antiseptic protocols before venipuncture.
- Always collect the recommended volume of blood to maximize test sensitivity **(8-10 mL per bottle)**.
- Do not draw blood cultures before an order is placed.

Follow-up Blood Culture Collection	
	
<b>NOT Needed to Confirm Clearance of:</b>	<b>Collect Two Blood Culture Sets:</b>
Bacteremia due to urinary tract infection	To confirm clearance of <i>Staphylococcus</i> bacteremia and candidemia
Most routine Gram-negative Bacteremia	To confirm bloodstream clearance when treating a catheter-related bloodstream infection when the catheter has been maintained
Bacteremia due to pneumonia or soft tissue infection	



If you have any questions, please contact Client Services at (800) 472-5757.