

Welcome to NHS Lothian from the Laboratory Staff and the Primary Care Laboratory Interface Group

Information about Laboratory Services

Laboratory services in NHS Lothian are spread across four sites – RIE, WGH, SJH and RHSC. The Laboratory website is a useful source of information and can be accessed at <http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/>

Laboratory Working Hours – The laboratory working hours are Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. A restricted/emergency service operates outside these times, and over the weekend.

Contacting us – Telephone numbers for each of the laboratory specialities (and lab reception) during working hours, as well as for on-call teams, can be found at the following links:

RIE: <http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/AboutUs/Contact/Pages/RIE.aspx>

RHSC: <http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/AboutUs/Contact/Pages/RHSC.aspx>

SJH: <http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/AboutUs/Contact/Pages/SJH-.aspx>

WGH: <http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/AboutUs/Contact/Pages/WGH.aspx>

Non-Urgent Clinical Advice Email Services - Biochemistry, microbiology and virology have email advice services which can be used for non-urgent clinical advice.

Biochemistry - RIE.BiochemAdvice@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Microbiology - GP.MicroAdvice@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Virology – virologyadvice@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Test Directory – The laboratory website has a searchable directory which can be used to find information about collection methods, sample tube requirements and specimen storage and where available, reference ranges and result interpretation. It can be accessed at: <http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/TestDirectory/Pages/default.aspx>

Practical Tips

Urgent samples – These should be placed in an envelope marked “URGENT BLOODS” to allow easier identification on arrival at the lab. Please:

- phone the lab if you wish to check arrival in the lab, or require results to be phoned
- provide clinical details with the test request whenever possible to aid laboratory interpretation of results, especially if there is a possibility of the result being telephoned to the Lothian Unscheduled Care Service (LUCS)

Phoning abnormal results – Within the lab, we employ additional telephone limits to identify blood results which should be phoned to Primary Care to ensure timely receipt of abnormal results. *Outside GP practice opening hours, these results may be phoned to LUCS.* Information about this process can be found at:

<http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/UsingTheService/Pages/ReportingResults.aspx>

Sample storage advice – Samples should be transferred to the lab as soon as practically possible after collection via the lab van service. If there should be any delay in samples

being picked up, information about how storage pending collection is available in the Specimen Storage Guide:

<http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/TestDirectory/Documents/NHS%20Lothian%20Specimen%20Storage%20Guide.pdf>

Sample stability – Many biochemistry tests have a relatively short period of stability. Serum potassium must reach the laboratory within 12 hours of blood being collected, and many other biochemistry tests must reach the lab within 24 or 48 hours. Therefore, it is usually best to avoid taking samples on a Friday afternoon, as far as practically possible.

High risk samples – High risk samples require additional labelling when being sent to the lab. Information about the relevant conditions and their handling requirements can be found at:

<http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/UsingTheService/RequestTests/Pages/HighRiskSamples.aspx>

(Please note: samples from patients with BBVs do not require high risk labelling.)

Additional blood test requests – In some circumstances, it is possible to add on additional test requests to a sample already received by the lab within five days of collection. Additional requests can be made by telephone or, at the RIE, by email. More information can be found at:

<http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/UsingTheService/RequestTests/Pages/AdditionalRequests.aspx>

Due to sample stability, it will not always be possible to add on additional tests - if this is the case, the requestor will be informed.

Patient self-collected specimens – For specimens collected by the patient (e.g. urine samples or STI swabs), please remind the patient to complete the time and date of collection on the label prior to handing in their specimen. Incomplete details may lead to samples not being processed.

24 hour urine samples – Urine containers can be requested from the lab. See the [laboratory website test directory](#) for further information.

Private test requests – Information about private test requests, including costs, can be obtained by contacting LabsIM&TTeam@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk.

PLIG: Primary Care Laboratory Interface Group

The PLIG group serves as a forum to bring together staff from Primary Care and Laboratory Medicine for collaborative working. PLIG meets bimonthly and is attended by representatives from General Practice, the laboratory disciplines and laboratory management.

In addition, PLIG organises an annual GP educational event to update GPs on topics relevant to laboratory medicine. More information about upcoming events and resources from previous meetings can be found on our website:

<http://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/PLIG/Pages/default.aspx>

Please contact us, via any of our members listed below, if you have any concerns or suggestions for improving laboratory services.

Interim Chair

Dr Jonathan Malo
Consultant Biochemist

Jonathan.Malo@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

GP members

Dr Clare MacRae (secretary)

Clare.MacRae@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Dr Catriona Morton

Catriona.Morton@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Dr Ramon McDermott

Ramon.X.McDermott@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Dr Emily Huggett

Emily.Huggett@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Dr Annie Lomas

Andrea.Lomas@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk