

URGENT – Effective Immediately

BLOOD CULTURE BOTTLE SHORTAGES

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

Explanation:

BD blood culture bottles, including pediatric and adult aerobic and anaerobic bottles, are nationally at critical supply levels with shortages anticipated to last for the duration of 2024. Without restrictions, VUMC will exhaust available and anticipated blood culture bottle volumes.

Restrictions:

- Effective July 2, 2024: Hard stop for blood cultures ordered within 48 h of a prior culture.
- Effective July 3, 2024: Initial blood culture panels will be restricted to a single set (1 aerobic and 1 anaerobic bottle) in place of the typical 2 sets.
- Effective July 3, 2024: Guidance on VUMC [blood culture algorithms](#) for adult patients use will go live in eStar/Epic.

Recommendations:

- In addition, blood cultures are NOT recommended in the following scenarios:
 - Patient with WBC elevation and no other signs/symptoms of sepsis
 - Patient with fever but no chills, leukocytosis, or other signs of sepsis
 - Stable patient with prosthetic joint infection
 - Stable patient with post-operative infection, planned for I&D with cultures in the OR
 - Patient with repeatedly negative blood cultures in past week
 - Patient with lower urinary tract infection (e.g., cystitis, prostatitis)
 - Patient with non-severe pneumonia
 - Patient with non-severe cellulitis
 - Daily surveillance cultures to document blood stream infection clearance
- Body fluids other than blood should NOT be placed in blood culture bottles for culture.
- Ensure bottles are filled to optimal volume (10mL for adult patients and according to [weight-based blood culture recommendations](#) for pediatric patients).
- Practice extra diligence to avoid contamination.
- Do NOT collect blood cultures before the order is placed.
- Do NOT discard a bottle and “try again” to get a better fill.

Questions:

Please contact Vanderbilt Medical Laboratories Customer Service at 615-875-5227 (5-LABS) or 800-551-5227 or visit our website: [Home | Vanderbilt Medical Laboratories \(vumc.org\)](#)