

# YNHH Laboratory Manual

## Turn Around Times

Laboratory Medicine has the responsibility for simultaneously processing many test requests, and has set up testing schedules that optimize frequency of test performance with regard to clinical needs and within the constraints of available resources.

Target turnaround times are listed for many tests, and reflect the time between receipt of the specimen in the laboratory and availability of the result on the laboratory computer. Often, the results will be available sooner than the target time.

Where turnaround times are not given, the laboratory attempts to adhere to the following: For testing that is performed around the clock, routine results will be available within 4 hours of specimen receipt. For tests listed as being available stat, results will be available within one hour of specimen receipt, provided stat testing has been requested or the sample is from the Emergency Department or an Intensive Care Unit. Note: Stat performance of tests without listed stat availability must be arranged with the laboratory. The time of result availability will be estimated at that time.

For tests performed daily, or less frequently, results will generally be available in the afternoon of those days on which the test is performed, provided the specimen is received prior to the listed cut off time. Results for specimens received after the cut off time will be available in the afternoon of the next day on which the test is performed.

For microbiology specimens submitted for culture, the minimum turnaround time is 24 hours from the time of receipt. Note that many specimens may be reported as showing "no growth" in the first 24 hours. For mycology, parasitology, and tuberculosis specimens, 6-8 weeks may be required before they are considered to be negative. During this time, these tests will receive a designation of "pending."

## Reporting of Results

Results for **inpatients** and outpatient areas that are on EPIC EMR are reported in the **hospital computer** system (EPIC) as soon as they are available. Paper reports are no longer printed for any inpatient or outpatient hospital department when test results are available in the computer.

For some **specialized tests**, such as reference laboratory tests, test reports must be **scanned** and uploaded into EPIC. Epic displays a hyperlink where the laboratory result would normally reside. When clicked, the scanned laboratory test report would display.

For **outpatients**, non-EPIC physicians, results are automatically faxed daily to the appropriate clinic or ordering physician's office.

## Critical Values Notification

A critical laboratory value is a test result that is significantly outside of "normal limits" (that is, the reference range) and that has significant medical implications for the patient that might require clinical action within a very short time span.

A list of tests for which critical values are established and the corresponding critical values are listed in the Critical Values Table in this Manual. Note that these critical values may differ depending on the clinical setting in which the patient is being cared for. They may also differ depending on age or other

# YNHH Laboratory Manual

demographic features. Also in some cases, designation of a result as a critical value depends on comparison to prior results.

These critical values are determined by the Medical Directors of the various laboratory sections in conjunction with YNHH Medical Staff. Critical values are called to an appropriate health care provider and must be 'read back' by that provider to assure accurate transmission of information. It is never acceptable for Critical Values to be sent via voice mail or text as no confirmation of 'read back' is generated.

## Other Telephoned Results

In addition to "Critical values", laboratories may elect to telephone results out of "courtesy", to alert clinicians regarding unusual or significant results. A list of all "courtesy calls" is kept in the individual labs and is updated continually.

## Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Downtime

If the EMR is down, results can be obtained through **Direct Lab Access**. The Department of Laboratory Medicine Computer Operations provides access to the laboratory system through Clinical Workstations with pull down menus identified as "Clinical Labs".

When computer access is not available, laboratory results may also be obtained by directly calling the laboratory responsible for performing the test:

| <b>Clinical Laboratory</b>            | <b>Internal Phone Number</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Blood Bank                            | 688-2443                     |
| Chemistry                             | 688-2444                     |
| Hematology                            | 688-2434                     |
| Immunology                            | 688-2440                     |
| Microbiology                          | 688-2460                     |
| Virology                              | 688-3524                     |
| Shoreline Medical Center Laboratory   | 203-453-7163                 |
| Smilow 4 Laboratory                   | 200-2394                     |
| North Haven Medical Center Laboratory | 203-287-6252                 |

When requesting results by telephone, please provide the patient's name and unit number.

Updated: January 16, 2019