



## TECHNICAL BULLETIN – MAY 2007

Through our partnership with Specialty Laboratories, **Consolidated Laboratory Services** is pleased to offer **bacterial vaginosis testing by PCR**.

Vaginitis is a common condition with very poor cure rates and high rates of recurrence. There is evidence that this condition contributes to increased risks for pre-term delivery, low birth weight, HIV infections, pelvic inflammatory disease, and post surgical infections. Vaginitis occurs when the normal vaginal flora, which consists primarily of *Lactobacillus* species, is replaced by populations of other microbes, most commonly comprised largely of *Trichomonas vaginalis*, *Candida albicans*, or *Gardnerella vaginalis* (the microbe most frequently found in bacterial vaginosis).

Misdiagnosis is common. Often *T. vaginalis* infections are misdiagnosed as *C. albicans*, and this can lead to ineffective treatment because each is best treated by different antibiotics.

A rapid and specific diagnosis of vaginitis can now be made using species-specific PCR probes, allowing practitioners access to prompt screening of pregnant women at risk for pre-term labor and more effective management of recurrent vaginitis.

### **Specimen Requirement:**

Vaginal sample collected with a brush or broom-type device and transferred to ThinPrep vial. Vigorously swirl collection device in the liquid preservative according to instructions. Specimen may be submitted ambient or refrigerated. Stable for 21 days.

### **Reference Range:**

*Candida albicans* DNA – Not detected  
*Gardnerella vaginalis* DNA – Not detected  
*Trichomonas vaginalis* DNA – Not detected

### **Interpretation:**

Although *Gardnerella vaginalis* is present in almost all cases of bacterial vaginosis, it is also frequently present in healthy vaginas. Detection of *G. vaginalis* by this test therefore does not necessarily imply bacterial vaginosis. Bacterial vaginosis can be confirmed by applying the criteria of Amsel, which specify that a diagnosis of bacterial vaginosis is made when 3 of the 4 following conditions are met:

1. a thin homogeneous white discharge
2. the presence of squamous epithelial cells with copious adherent coccobacilli (clue cells) upon microscopic exam
3. vaginal fluid pH > 4.5
4. fishy odor before or after adding 10% KOH (whiff test)



See other side



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### Why Didn't We Get Sensitivities on our Patient's Culture?

From time to time, **Consolidated Laboratory Services** is asked why sensitivities were not performed on a patient's sample, even when the request stated culture and **sensitivity**. The answer depends on a number of factors including specimen source, type(s) of organism(s) isolated, whether the organism is considered a pathogen or part of the normal flora from skin, respiratory, urogenital, and rectal sites, and finally the ability of the organism to grow for sensitivities.

The following represent a list of organisms which not do routinely qualify for further sensitivity studies:

1. Group A,B,C,F,G Strep
2. Neisseria gonorrhoeae (GC)
3. Anaerobes unless from a blood culture, spinal fluid culture, or sterile internal body organ
4. Corynebacterium/Diphtheroids
5. Brucella
6. Yeasts and molds unless specifically requested
7. Normal flora in sites such as oropharyngeal, urogenital, fecal, skin, etc.
8. Viridans strep unless from blood culture or cerebral spinal fluid cultures
9. Coag negative Staph(Staph epidermidis) from non sterile sources unless in pure culture
10. Lactobacillus
11. Campylobacter
12. Helicobacter

If any of the above organisms are isolated on the patient's culture, your office will receive a report with the name of the organism(s) identified, gram stain findings if performed, and "no further workup". This indicates that no sensitivities will be performed.

Our laboratory strives to provide practitioners with the data needed to properly treat their patients, while maintaining established Microbiology protocols. On occasion, offices may have a patient who presents with a unique set of circumstances such as known allergy to penicillin products, etc. In these situations, please write all pertinent information on the Test Request form or you may contact our Customer Call Center at 308-5600 prompt #2 for further guidance.

