

September 8th, 2025


25-35

To: IH Ophthalmologists
From: Dr. Bing Wang, Medical Microbiologist
Melinda Carrier, Health Services Director

Re: Change in procedure for free-living amoebae diagnostic testing

The BCCDC Public Health Parasitology Laboratory is updating its procedure for the diagnosis of free-living amoebae (FLA) infection (includes testing for *Acanthamoeba* species, *Naegleria fowleri* and *Balamuthia mandrillaris*). Effective immediately, *Acanthamoeba* culture will be discontinued and replaced by PCR testing for FLA diagnosis.

Important Information

- For corneal scrapings:
 - Collection containers: eSwab **and/or** phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) tube (+/- flocced swab).
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- Corneal scrapings can be directly inoculated into the collection tubes or perform collection using the swabs provided.
 - Collection supplies can be requested from an IH microbiology laboratory (please give 48 hours notice) or from BCCDC (email: bccdc_para@phsa.ca).
 - **Pre-inoculated culture plates and slides are no longer required.**
- Refer to the IH Microbiology Laboratory Test Directory for more information in specimen collection and ordering: [microbiology-guide-to-specimen-ordering-collection-and-transport-information.pdf](#)

Action Required

- Submit swab specimen(s) as described above for FLA PCR testing on corneal specimens.
- Continue to submit samples for FLA testing to your local IH laboratory. Samples will be forwarded to BCCDC for testing.