Testing Information **Vaginal Swabs** – Non-molecular

INTRODUCTION

From 4 December 2017 the handling of non-molecular vaginal swabs, by the Microbiology department, will change. Processing will only be performed if appropriate clinical particulars are provided. The aim is to provide appropriate testing for patients and reduce unnecessary processing.

The provision of clinical details is currently a requirement of several Microbiology laboratories. Audits have shown that many samples are collected unnecessarily on asymptomatic women, for instance as part of routine cervical smear screening.

Please see the position statement from the New Zealand Microbiology Network here

GRAM STAIN

- Examination for the presence of bacterial vaginosis, yeast and white cells
- Performed on vaginal swabs with appropriate clinical details

CULTURE

Bacterial cultures are rarely indicated in women with vaginal discharge. As many bacteria colonise the vagina, culture results are often misleading and may result in unnecessary antibiotic use.

- Culture for bacteria will be performed on:
    - Girls less than 13 years of age
    - Increased white cells present in the gram stain
    - Immunocompromised patients
    - Post-surgery/instrumentation infection
    - Pregnant patients - as detailed below

Request for a specific organism e.g. *Streptococcus pyogenes* (not Listeria)

DETAILS

- **Girls less than 13 years old** - all vaginal swabs will be processed regardless of clinical details

- *Trichomonas vaginalis* - testing will only be performed on specific request

- **Pregnancy**   Enrichment broth for Group B Streptococcus will be performed:
    - on request
    - if the woman is ≥ 30/40 weeks
    - indication of labour symptoms

- **Yeast**   If refractory or recurrent yeast infection is indicated, a yeast culture will be performed. A yeast culture is more sensitive than microscopy and allows species identification

- **Other**   Please provide clinical details and specify what testing is required

SAMPLES WITHOUT APPROPRIATE CLINICAL DETAILS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED