



MARYLAND Department of Health

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

Candida Isolate Submission Frequently Asked Questions

What are the new requirements?

Per the memo sent on October 8, 2018, Maryland Department of Health is requiring clinical laboratories in Maryland submit:

- 1) confirmed or suspected *C. auris* isolates;
- 2) yeast isolates when unable to identify species after identification was attempted; and
- 3) *Candida* species isolates **other than** *C. albicans* from all body sites.

What is the purpose of this new measure?

Yeasts meeting the criteria listed above are now reportable per Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 10.06.01.03. The purpose of sending these isolates is twofold:

- 1) to identify new and emerging pathogens, like *C. auris*, that pose public health threats and
- 2) to better understand and monitor trends in antimicrobial resistance patterns for existing and emerging pathogens

Data will also be submitted to CDC to inform future recommendations and policy.

We send our samples to LabCorp/Quest Diagnostics, which are based outside of Maryland. Are they subject to these new requirements?

LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics are licensed in Maryland, and are therefore subject to these new requirements as well. Notices have been sent to both. Should a LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics facility identify an eligible isolate, it is their responsibility to send the isolates to the Maryland Public Health Laboratory (MDPHL). Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the original submitter to ensure the required isolates were sent to MDPHL.

Can you clarify whether we should use the criteria on the page labeled 'Send Candida Isolates to Your Public Health Lab' or the criteria in the memo asking for all Candida species other than C. albicans?

To simplify the sampling scheme, MDPHL requests all non-*albicans* isolates that submitters consider to be a *significant, disease-causing pathogen*.

My facility sees patients from all over the country/the world. Do you want to see isolates from those patients?

Please only send us isolates from patients residing *or receiving care* in Maryland.

My facility has inpatient and outpatient populations. Are you only interested in inpatient populations?

No, we would like to see isolates from all Maryland-residing populations you serve as well as those who receive care in Maryland.

My lab already uses MALDI-TOF for yeast identification. Why do I need to send you yeasts for identification I can do myself?

One of the central objectives of this new initiative is disease surveillance. Centralized testing allows for standardized methods across the state and ensures better monitoring of emerging pathogens and patterns of antimicrobial resistance. Additionally, the testing performed on these isolates will ultimately include more than just identification, e.g. antifungal susceptibility testing.

We have many specimens simply identified as ‘yeast’ without further characterization. It is an undue burden for us to rule out C. albicans to prep for submission.

You are not required to send unidentified yeasts to us if your facility determines a yeast is:

- 1) not a *significant, disease causing pathogen*; **and**
- 2) not suspected *C. auris* (colonizing or disease-causing); **and**
- 3) not clinically relevant to speciate beyond being Candida.

Please do not send us isolates for which you have not ruled out *C. albicans*.

Can we submit isolates to you using a line list excel document instead of one form per isolate?

Unfortunately, we cannot accept line list test orders at this time, though we hope to for the future. Here are some other suggestions to reduce the reporting burden on your staff:

- Batch all non-suspected-*C. auris* isolates every two weeks.
 - All confirmed or suspected *C. auris* must be sent within **1-2 business days**.
- Pre-fill the submission form with your facility’s information so you only have to include patient demographics and body sites for isolates.

Do we have to pay to ship isolates to MDPHL?

No. Isolates can be routed through County or City Health Department couriers to MDPHL or, if necessary, submitters can request to ship isolates using the ARLN FedEx account.

How should I send Candida isolates to MDPHL?

Isolates should be sent on a Sabouraud Dextrose slant accompanied by a completed [requisition form](#).

Who should I reach out to if I have additional questions?

Please direct additional questions to the ARLN Lab-Epi Coordinator, Liore Klein, at 443-681-3945 or email liore.klein@maryland.gov and copy mdphl.arln@maryland.gov.