



New Brunswick College of Pharmacists Ordre des pharmaciens du Nouveau-Brunswick

FAQ: LABORATORY TEST ORDERING BY PHARMACISTS

These FAQs provide general guidance on when pharmacists may order laboratory tests to support medication management. Currently, laboratory test ordering is limited to pharmacists whose information has been provided by the College to Horizon Health Network and who have completed Horizon Health Network's [Laboratory Orientation & Resources](#) e-learning program on navigating the requisition process.

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SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

Ordering a laboratory test does not expand prescribing authority. The pharmacist who orders the test is responsible for reviewing and acting on the result and ensuring reliable follow-up, including coverage for critical results.

Pharmacists are responsible for assessing their own competence and self-directed learning is expected where additional knowledge or skills are needed.

When can I order a laboratory test?

When the test is appropriate to support medication management that is already within your scope, authority and competence. This may include assessing treatment response, dose appropriateness or adverse effects. Laboratory requisitions must support medication management for an existing diagnosis and treatment and remain within the scope of prescribing practice under Section 21 of the Regulations.

Example: Can I order a TSH for a patient taking levothyroxine? Can I adapt the dose based on the results?



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Yes. If the TSH is needed to manage the patient's levothyroxine therapy and this medication-management activity is within your scope, you may order the test and adapt the prescription based on the results.

Can I order tests to screen for or diagnose a condition?

Not when the testing is unrelated to medication management. For example, ordering an A1C solely to diagnose diabetes falls outside the current guidance. The focus is on managing existing treatment, rather than screening without a diagnosis or treatment to manage.

Can I order serology for school, employment or placement requirements?

Generally, no. Testing for an administrative requirement, rather than to manage medication, falls outside the current guidance.

Can I adjust a dose or change therapy based on the result?

Only if the change is within your existing prescribing or prescription adaptation authority. Ordering a laboratory test does not expand that authority. Assessing and prescribing for chronic conditions remains subject to existing limits.

Can I manage a chronic medication because another provider referred the patient to me?

Only if that medication-management activity is already within your authority. A referral does not expand your scope of practice.

BEFORE ORDERING

Should I check for a recent result first?

Yes. Check whether an appropriate recent result is already available, so the test is not unnecessarily repeated.

Can I use a result ordered by another provider?

Yes, when it is relevant to medication management and using it is within your competence.



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Can I order a test so the patient has a result for another provider?

No. If you order the test, you remain responsible for reviewing and following up on the result until another appropriate provider has assumed responsibility. Ordering a test solely for another provider to review does not remove that responsibility.

Can another provider ask me to order a test for them?

You must independently decide whether the test is appropriate within your own scope and accept responsibility for reviewing and following up on the result.

Do I need the patient's consent?

Yes. The patient should understand why the test is being ordered and what follow-up to expect.

RESULTS AND FOLLOW-UP

Who is responsible for following up on a result?

The pharmacist who ordered the test remains responsible for reviewing and following up on it, with an appropriate coverage arrangement when absent.

What if a result is abnormal but not critical?

Assess the result and take appropriate steps for follow-up, referral and documentation. A result does not have to be critical to require action.

What if the result identifies something outside my scope?

Refer the patient to an appropriate provider and support continuity of care.

What should I document?

Document the reason for ordering the test, the result and your interpretation, communication with the patient and other providers, follow-up, and any action taken.

What if I cannot reach the patient?

Take reasonable steps based on the urgency of the result, follow the pharmacy's escalation process, and document your contact attempts and actions.



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CRITICAL RESULTS AND COVERAGE

Critical values are laboratory results that indicate a life-threatening situation for the patient. Urgent notification of the appropriate health-care professional is mandatory under the Standards for Hospitals in New Brunswick in accordance with Accreditation Canada.

Do I personally have to be available 24-hours a day?

No, provided there is a reliable 24-hour process for receiving and acting on critical results and an appropriate backup arrangement. The ordering pharmacist must provide after-hours and emergency contact information to the facility processing the test.

What is expected of a backup pharmacist?

While covering, the backup pharmacist must be able to receive, assess and act on results and assumes the corresponding responsibilities. Those responsibilities may be transferred back to the ordering pharmacist when they are available.

Am I required to share the results directly with the patient?

Patients may access their laboratory results through MyHealthNB. The pharmacist who orders the test remains responsible for reviewing the result, communicating clinically significant findings and their interpretation to the patient, and ensuring appropriate follow-up.

Is responsibility individual or pharmacy-wide?

The ordering pharmacist is clinically responsible for the result. The pharmacy manager is responsible for ensuring that a written process exists for handling critical values.

EDUCATION, RESOURCES AND AVAILABILITY

Is specific education required or recommended?

Pharmacists are expected to assess their own competence and ensure they have the knowledge and skills needed for this activity. The College does not endorse a specific training program.

[Horizon Health](#) requires users to complete the [Laboratory Orientation & Resources](#) e-learning program. Their [website](#) has key region-specific resources and requisition forms available under the Clinical Resources tab. Patients can [self-book](#) appointments by selecting their region under Blood and Specimen collection.



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CPhA offers a [Lab Test](#) continuing education course accredited for 15 CEUs under CCCEP # 8002-2026-4140-I-P.

NBPA features chronic disease management training from PANS at their member rate, and Jaime McDonald's [laboratory monitoring refresher](#) from their 2026 annual conference.

NBPA will also be hosting information webinars in the coming weeks for pharmacists in Zone 3 who have been granted laboratory privileges. These sessions will provide practical guidance and help address outstanding operational and process questions as pharmacists begin ordering labs for their patients. Watch for upcoming registration details and information on how to participate.

Why is this available through Horizon but not Vitalité?

The College has had initial discussions with Vitalité Health Network about pharmacists' capabilities. The College is willing to engage in a similar process when Vitalité is ready to do so.