



Technical Bulletin

Clarification on Throat Cultures

TO: Medical Staff and Clients

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SUBJECT: Routine and Special-Circumstance Use of Throat Culture

The primary test for *Streptococcus pyogenes* (group A Streptococcus; GAS) is NAAT (PCR) – order code 5824. Testing for GAS is intended to identify patients who may benefit from antimicrobial therapy, including prevention of acute rheumatic fever and suppurative complications, reduction of transmission, and earlier return to school, work, and usual activities.¹ For cases of suspected bacterial pharyngitis caused by other beta-hemolytic streptococci such as groups C and G or *Arcanobacterium haemolyticum* we offer routine throat culture (order code 616).

We do NOT routinely screen throat cultures for other organisms such as *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Fusobacterium necrophorum*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Candida* species, or *Moraxella catarrhalis*. Isolation of these organisms may require special culture conditions and/or may not reliably distinguish colonization from clinically significant infection. Furthermore, we do NOT routinely screen for special-circumstances pathogens such as extragenital *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, *Neisseria meningitidis* colonization, or unvaccinated diphtheria (*Corynebacterium diphtheriae*) unless we are alerted to this possibility.

For suspected special-circumstance pathogens or complicated oropharyngeal infections (e.g., epiglottitis, peritonsillar abscess, oral thrush, or Lemierre's syndrome), please provide relevant clinical information and/or the suspected target organism on the requisition. This information allows the laboratory to select appropriate media, incubation conditions, and/or additional testing methods.

In addition to publishing this bulletin, we have incorporated additional ordering guidance in our on-line submission guidelines under METHODOLOGY (<https://til.dlslab.com/physicians/test-directory-view-test/?test=6160>).

Order codes:	5824	Strep A by Nucleic Acid Test
	616	Throat culture (groups A, B, C & G beta-hemolytic streptococci or <i>A. haemolyticum</i>)
	625	Extragenital culture for <i>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</i>
	5681	Culture for <i>Corynebacterium diphtheriae</i>

Reference:

¹Jeffrey A Linder, et al., 2025 Clinical Practice Guideline Update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America on Group A Streptococcal Pharyngitis: Risk Assessment Using Clinical Scoring Systems in Children and Adults, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Volume 82, Issue Supplement_3, 15 April 2026, Pages i97–i104, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciaf668>

Please refer any questions to Tori Enomoto, Manager - DLS Microbiology Laboratory at 808- 441-5470, or DLS Client Services at 589-5101.