



BNP Guidelines

BNP testing costs nearly \$750,000 a year across the Waikato, Lakes and BOP regions and is increasing year on year. Many of these tests add little to patient management. The **DHB Shared Services Laboratory Test Referral Guidelines** note:

“The natriuretic peptides are extremely useful for evaluation of patients with non-specific symptoms of early chronic heart failure. In particular, the strong negative predictive value of a normal result is very useful and enables evaluation and treatment to be directed elsewhere.

A clearly high result supports heart failure, although in most acute cases this is clinically obvious through other means and measurement adds little to management or prognosis.

The value is much less well established for guiding ongoing anti-failure treatment, and at present they have a secondary role only. NICE guidelines (UK) recommend their use for this purpose be restricted to difficult patients under specialist management. Current NHF/NZGG guidelines do not specifically restrict their use in this setting but have not encouraged it.”

We recommend:

- The BNP should be used in patients with suspected but undiagnosed heart failure.
- BNP should be measured once unless there is a repeat episode of suspected heart failure with a change in clinical presentation and the diagnosis of heart failure has previously been excluded.
- Do not do a BNP if the result will not change management.
- Do not use the BNP routinely to monitor therapy in heart failure.
- The laboratory will not process repeated BNP requests within 7 days.
- Please include relevant clinical details on the request form as absence of relevant details may result in the request being declined

Whole Blood Chemistry Testing

In order to standardise processes across all Pathlab sites, as well as to ensure consistency of results, from 01/04/20, the laboratory will no longer be accepting lithium heparin specimens for whole blood chemistry analysis. Whole blood chemistry analysis will only be performed as part of a full blood gas profile, on a blood gas sample syringe.

Lithium Heparin samples will still be accepted for pH, Bicarbonate, Carboxyhaemoglobin and Methaemoglobin testing. Any lithium heparin specimens received with a whole blood chemistry request will be centrifuged and analysed as a standard chemistry specimen and will **not** include lactate or ionised calcium.

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Please ensure all members of your institution
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