



Memo

St Vincent's Pathology
26/3/20

Dear Colleagues,

We wish to assure you that St Vincent's Pathology will continue to support your patients, their carers, you and your staff in the coming weeks and months as we all face the challenges of the effects of the COVID-19 virus pandemic on the health care system including pathology services. Our staff are undertaking and regularly reviewing contingency planning to respond to the needs of the community and the hospital system as the situation evolves.

Social distancing and other measures have been introduced to reduce the risk of transmission of infection to patients, healthcare workers and community members. As you will appreciate it is important to consider the risk and benefit for patients attending a collection centre or pathology collectors attending collection in patients home where testing may be able to be deferred or is not essential for current clinical decisions. Depending on workload, staffing and service prioritisation we may need to modify the testing scope and other services we offer in coming weeks and recommend that referrers review the need for non-urgent pathology testing at this stage and ongoing.

We would also request that you review your patients on warfarin anticoagulation therapy who require regular INR monitoring. This testing requires close contact with pathology collectors and contributes to the pathology workload.

Direct acting oral anticoagulants (DOACs) such as dabigatran, apixaban and rivaroxaban, may be a suitable alternative to warfarin for eligible patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation and venous thromboembolism, provided there are no problematic drug interactions with current medications. If a patient can be safely transitioned to one of these agents this will obviate the need for INR monitoring. Warfarin however may be the preferred oral anticoagulant in patients with renal impairment, extremes of body weight and anti-phospholipid syndrome. For further advice on transitioning to DOACs or any other anticoagulation matter, please contact our laboratory haematologist on 9231-2030 or refer to MIMS and NSW guidelines [http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/326419/noac_guidelines.pdf]

Please contact our call centre on 9231 2888 for any queries and please indicate if you would like advice from our medical staff. We will update you with any changes. We greatly appreciate your support during this challenging time.