



## Unnecessary Pathology – Tissues for Disposal

**Go Live: December 15, 2017**

Date Issued: November 24, 2017

Effective December 15, 2017, Diagnostic Services Manitoba will reference section 6(2) of The Hospital Standards Regulation as outlined in [The Hospitals Act](#) for exemptions from pathology examination.

It is always under a physician's discretion to order a pathology examination for any human tissue, regardless of whether the type of tissue specimen sent to pathology is on an exemption list.

The Province of Manitoba provides guidelines on the requirements for sending specimens to pathology and outlines which specimens can be exempted from examination. Physician knowledge of, and compliance with, the relevant pathology policies helps ensure appropriate use of testing and resources. Please refer to the references section below for resources that provide evidence on the clinical utility of pathology services, which can help to inform a physician's decision regarding exemption.

### **If there are clinical indications for a pathology examination:**

When there is reason to suspect the presence of disease on clinical grounds, tissues should be sent to pathology with a specific written request for a pathology examination and pertinent clinical information clearly documented on the requisition.

**All specimens received that are clinically indicated by the clinician that pathology examination is required will be processed as per routine DSM policy.**

Tissues designated for disposal should be disposed of on-site, according to facility guidelines for disposal of biohazard waste. If you have any questions regarding on-site disposal please contact Karen Cormier at (204)977-5621 or [kcormier3@dsmanitoba.ca](mailto:kcormier3@dsmanitoba.ca).

### **Background Information:**

Unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures undermine our ability to provide optimal care by potentially exposing patients to delay and even unintended harm. Additionally, unnecessary testing and care takes away limited resources from our health care system. In a recent publication, *Unnecessary Care in Canada*, Choosing Wisely Canada (CWC) and the Canadian Institute for Health Informatics (CIHI) reported that "up to 30% of selected medical tests, treatments and procedures in Canada are



## CLINICAL PRACTICE CHANGE

potentially unnecessary and that Canadians have more than one million potentially unnecessary medical tests and treatments every year.”

DSM receives many tissue/pathology specimens for which there is no medical indication that pathology examination is clinically warranted – meaning that the results will have no impact on clinical management or patient outcomes. Not only is this an inefficient use of resources, resulting in unnecessary cost, it can also delay the results for the clinically relevant cases.

DSM is committed to ensuring the best care for our patients and providing the best service to our clients.

### References/Resources

- [Routine Ordering Primary Pathology Examinations Canada](#)
- [Unnecessary Care in Canada](#)
- [Surgical pathology specimens for gross examination only and exempt from submission: a College of American Pathologists Q-Probes study of current policies in 413 institutions](#)

### System Improvements:

Taking measures to ensure the most appropriate use of resources will help to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of diagnostics and Manitoba’s health care system as a whole.

### Contact Information:

Please contact the DSM phone center at 204-787-1534 and they will address your concerns or redirect them as required.

### Clinical Practice Change Issued By:

Dr. Amin Kabani, Chief Medical Officer; Dr. Gabor Fischer, Medical Director, Anatomic Pathology; Dr. Julianne Klein, Chair, Quality Assurance Standards Committee; Karen Cormier, Project Manager.

**Distribution:** This Clinical Practice Change is directed to all ordering professionals in Manitoba.

### For More information:

- [The Hospitals Act](#)
- WRHA Policy #110.220.070: [Pathology Specimens \(Management of\) – Acute Care Setting](#)
- WRHA Policy #110.020.060: [Medical Devices - Implanted and Explanted - Management Of](#)



Effective: December 15, 2017

## Tissues for Exemption as outlined in 'The Hospitals Act'

The following specimens are **exempt** from sending for pathology examination unless otherwise directed by a physician:

- Amputation stumps – secondary
- Bone fragments and ligaments
- Bony ossicles (ears)
- Cartilage, external ear (plastic)
- Foreign bodies (including bones, plates, nails, and screws)
- Fingers and toes
- Hernia sac
- Hydrocele sac
- Intervertebral discs
- Meningocele sac
- Nails - toe and finger
- Nasal septa when removed for obstruction only
- Optic lens
- Placentas
- Prepuces under 25 years of age
- Ribs removed incidental to chest surgery
- Scar tissue
- Semilunar cartilages
- Teeth
- Tendon segments removed incidental to orthopaedic procedures
- Tonsils and adenoids under 25 years of age
- Vaginal wall fragments (plastic repair)
- Varicocele
- Vein strippings

---

It is **always** under a physician's discretion to order a pathology examination for any human tissue, regardless of whether the type of specimen sent to pathology is on an exemption list.

---

Refer to WRHA Policy# [110.220.060](#) for management of implanted or explanted medical devices.