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Maine Health Alert Network (HAN) System

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Health Care Providers
From: Dr. Isaac Benowitz, State Epidemiologist
Subject: U.S. CDC: Disruptions in Availability of Becton Dickinson (BD) BACTEC™ Blood Culture Bottles
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U.S. CDC: Disruptions in Availability of Becton Dickinson (BD) BACTEC™ Blood Culture Bottles

Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC) is issuing this Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to inform healthcare providers, laboratory professionals, healthcare facility administrators, and state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments of a critical [shortage](#) of Becton Dickinson (BD) BACTEC™ blood culture media bottles. This shortage has the potential to disrupt patient care by leading to delays in diagnosis, misdiagnosis, or other challenges in the clinical management of patients with certain infectious diseases. Healthcare providers, laboratory professionals, healthcare facility administrators, and state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments affected by this shortage should immediately begin to assess their situations and develop plans and options to mitigate the potential impact of the shortage on patient care.

Background

Blood cultures are critical for assisting healthcare providers with diagnosing patients with bloodstream infections and associated conditions including endocarditis, catheter-related bloodstream infections and sepsis. Blood cultures can identify the microorganisms causing these infections, and follow-on antimicrobial susceptibility testing can be performed to help guide optimal therapy. Negative blood culture results can help to rule out certain severe infections as a cause of a patient's illness. Repeat blood cultures may be used for patients with certain infections, like *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteremia, to help guide treatment duration. Most blood cultures in the United States are performed using continuous-monitoring blood culture systems; the BD continuous-monitoring blood culture system is used in about half of all U.S. laboratories and is only compatible with BD BACTEC™ blood culture media bottles.

Unnecessary and incorrect blood culture collection are not only detrimental to patient care but can contribute to or exacerbate shortages of blood culture media bottles. Thus, experts in laboratory utilization recommend that all facilities should implement diagnostic stewardship best practices to improve blood culture ordering and collection practices. Several studies have demonstrated that unnecessary blood cultures can be reduced without an increase in adverse events. These studies can serve as a template for collaborative efforts to reduce the number of unnecessary blood cultures performed in healthcare facilities. In addition, U.S. CDC offers a [quality tool](#) to prevent blood culture contamination and improve diagnostic accuracy.

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers and Phlebotomists

- Implement [practices](#) to optimize the use of blood cultures at your facility.
- Take [steps](#) to prevent blood culture contamination.
- Ensure that the [appropriate volume](#) is collected when collecting blood for culture.

Recommendations for Laboratory Professionals and Healthcare Facility Administrators

- Determine the type of blood culture bottles your laboratory or facility uses and whether this shortage will impact you.
- Implement [practices](#) to optimize the use of blood cultures at your facility. Doing so may be helpful even for facilities not affected by the shortage.
- Take [steps](#) to prevent blood culture contamination. Contamination can negatively affect patient care and may require the collection of more blood cultures to help determine whether contamination has occurred.
- Ensure that the [appropriate volume](#) is collected when collecting blood for culture. Underfilling bottles decreases the sensitivity to detect bacteremia/fungemia and may require additional blood cultures to be drawn to diagnose an infection.
- If your laboratory or facility will be impacted by the bottle shortage, determine whether you have alternative options for blood cultures (e.g., working with a nearby facility or sending samples out to a laboratory not affected by the shortage).
- Monitor current and future supplies of blood culture bottles at your laboratory or facility and report any potential shortages or interruptions to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
deviceshortages@fda.hhs.gov
- If your facility will be impacted by the bottle shortage, convene a group of local laboratory and clinical experts to determine how a limited supply of blood culture bottles will be [prioritized](#) for use in your facility.

For More Information

- [BD Update, CDC Blood Culture Quality Tools, and Blood Culture Utilization | U.S. CDC's Laboratory Outreach Communication System \(LOCS\)](#)
- [Disruptions in Availability of BD BACTEC Blood Culture Media Bottles - Letter to Health Care Providers | FDA](#)
- [Medical Device Shortages List | FDA](#)
- [Blood Culture Contamination \(BCC\) Prevention | U.S. CDC](#)
- [Preventing Adult Blood Culture Contamination: A Quality Tool for Clinical Laboratory Professionals | U.S. CDC](#)
- [Blood Culture Contamination: An Overview for Infection Control and Antibiotic Stewardship Programs Working with the Clinical Laboratory | U.S. CDC](#)
- [Guide to Utilization of the Microbiology Laboratory for Diagnosis of Infectious Diseases: 2024 Update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America \(IDSA\) and the American Society for Microbiology \(ASM\)](#)
- [Blood Culture Stewardship | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)

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