

Effective December 17, 2019, TriCore Reference Laboratories will no longer accept blood samples collected onto filter paper for blood lead testing, and test code LEADFP “LEAD, BLOOD (FILTER PAPER)” will be deactivated.

Lead is a common toxic metal in the environment. As such, it is a frequent cause of falsely elevated lead test results in blood samples collected onto filter paper due to contamination from lead present on skin and other surfaces. Blood collected by venipuncture limits the opportunity for specimen contamination and is the preferred sample type. Capillary blood samples will continue to be accepted if collected into capillary blood collection tubes.

Whole blood lead testing can be ordered as test code LEAD “Lead, Blood (Venous),” the preferred sample type for routine testing for lead exposure or test code LEADC “Lead, Blood (Capillary),” collected into a capillary blood collection tube, and an acceptable sample type for routine testing for lead exposure in pediatric populations. Elevated results from the latter must be confirmed by repeat testing using venous blood.

| TRICORE TEST CODE | TEST NAME | SAMPLE TYPE | SAMPLE CONTAINER | COMMENT |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---|
| LEAD | Lead, Blood (Venous) | Whole Blood | Lavender top tube (EDTA) | Preferred sample type for routine testing for lead exposure. |
| LEADC | Lead, Blood (Capillary) | Whole Blood | Lavender top capillary tube (EDTA) | Acceptable sample type for routine testing for lead exposure in pediatric populations. Elevated results must be confirmed by repeat testing using venous blood. |

We appreciate your assistance in our effort to improve the health of our communities.