

## New Boric Acid Containers for Urine Microscopy and Culture

The specimen containers used for urine microscopy culture are changing from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017.

The new specimen containers include boric acid preservative.

The presence of boric acid helps to maintain the microbiological quality of the specimen and prevents overgrowth of organisms during transport to the lab. Boric acid containers are used commonly in most laboratories. The decision to move to boric acid containers is based on improving the quality of the test results so as to achieve optimal results the samples should be analysed within 4 hours of collection, however an audit has shown that there are a significant numbers of urines that are >24hrs old when they are received in the laboratory. The new boric acid containers will be supplied for routine microbiology urine analysis only. They must not be used for specimens requiring Chlamydia testing, any biochemistry tests or pregnancy tests – for which a plain universal container should still be used.

The new containers are the standard 30ml universal size, with a red lid and a small amount of white boric acid powder in the bottom and can be obtained using your normal requisition process.



### **Boric Acid Universal Containers (red cap)**

Must only be used for:

#### **Microbiology urine microscopy and culture**

- All other tests using this universal will be rejected
- Please do not remove the boric acid (white powder) and use as a plain container - the residual boric acid may affect the test results



### **Plain Universal Containers (white cap)**

Must continue to be used for:

- Dip strip tests in clinics and GP's
- Urines for Chlamydia/GC PCR testing
- Urines for pregnancy testing
- Urines for Legionella / pneumococcal antigen testing
- Urines (EMU) for mycobacterium culture
- Sterile fluids, CSF, pus, tissue specimens for culture
- Other pathology tests where appropriate

If Boric acid containers are unavailable then the white topped may be sent for urine microscopy and culture but please ensure the samples are sent to the laboratory within 4 hours of collection