

THE MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL & MOUNT SINAI QUEENS
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE
Positive Blood Culture Interpretation Guideline

EFFECTIVE DATE

December 2022

PURPOSE

This guideline is intended to aid attending physicians and physician assistants in making recommendations for positive blood culture notifications when in the emergency department.

PROCESS

- MSH Clinical Laboratory Department will contact the PA in charge at 929-658-9024 or ED Provider at MSQ at 718-267-4286 to notify them of positive blood cultures for the following
 - Patients who were **discharged** from the ED or RETU observation unit (NOT admitted)
 - If the PA in charge does not pick up above number @ MSH, call 212-241-6639 and ask for PA in charge
 - Result must be verbally given in real time, positive blood culture results cannot be left over voicemail or Epic Secure Chat
- MSH Clinical Laboratory Department will contact the primary nurse for the following
 - Patients currently in the ED that are **NOT** admitted
 - RN to notify front line provider and assigned attending MD
- MSH Clinical Laboratory Department must notify the patient's Frontline Provider (FLP), or Admitting provider for the following
 - Patients who are currently admitted, or patients who were admitted to the hospital under the Medicine service or another specialty service and then later discharged by that team
 - Note: The PA in charge does **NOT** receive notifications of positive blood culture results for admitted patients
- The Emergency Department staff will recommend that all patients with positive blood culture results (on gram stain, or organism identification) be called following the notification and encouraged to return immediately to the emergency department for reevaluation and repeat blood cultures

- If no contact can be made with any of the patient's listed phone numbers including emergency contacts, MSH patients should be sent telegram by emailing TelecomHealthSystemManagers@mountsinai.org ;MSQ patients should be sent a mailgram by Epic Secure chatting the clerk on shift and requesting an urgent mailgram; both listing instructions to return to ED ASAP
 - If patients have an Active MyChart, a message should be sent to them via MyChart to call back the ED and/or return to ED
 - If patients cannot be reached or will not return immediately, an additional PA call-back should be requested for a total of three calls as a Telephone Encounter (in addition to any telegram/MyChart message). The purpose of this callback is to evaluate the interval status of the patient and again encourage medical follow-up.
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- At the discretion of the physician in charge (attending physician), patients may be given the option of returning the next day for follow-up. Patients who note improving symptoms, have a blood culture result that is likely consistent with external contamination (eg. coagulase negative gram positive staphylococci, corynebacterium, propionibacterium) without prosthetic devices or indwelling catheters may be candidates for deferred medical attention.
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- Some patients may be evaluated in the ED with positive blood culture results and sent home without antibiotics as the blood culture was presumed to be contaminated by the treating ED attending. In these cases, an additional PA call-back should be requested in the Communications section of the patient's chart to ensure that final species identification (or if relevant, the coagulase-status) are consistent with the presumed contamination.