



August 16, 2018 [Revised]

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Dear OSPHL Clients,

Beginning September 4, 2018, the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) will begin using a new testing method to confirm the presence of antibodies against *Treponema pallidum*, the bacterium that causes syphilis infection. We are replacing the FTA-ABS (DS) assay with the Syphilis TP (**Syph-TP**) immunoassay. We would like you to be aware of this change in syphilis testing.

Please share this notice with staff who order these tests or receive and interpret laboratory results.

#### What is changing?

The Syph-TP assay will replace FTA-ABS assay as a confirmatory reflex test for reactive (positive) non-treponemal Rapid Plasma Reagin screened (RPR) specimens. Syph-TP will increase the sensitivity, specificity and reproducibility of syphilis confirmatory testing.

All RPR screening specimens testing positive will be reflexed using the traditional algorithm to the Syph-TP assay – even if the test wasn't requested. If a Syph-TP assay is ordered without an RPR screen request, we will test according to the traditional algorithm for the RPR screen and the Syph-TP assay. If the patient was previously found to be reactive with a treponemal antibody assay (FTA or Syph-TP), the OSPHL will not perform this test.

We will continue to use the FTA-ABS (DS) assay *only* as a secondary reflex test if the Syphilis RPR screen and Syph-TP assay give discrepant results.

The CPT for Syph-TP is 86780 and the fee \$12.74, the same as for Syphilis FTA-ABS (DS). If both Syph-TP and FTA-ABS (DS) need to be performed, you will see both charges on your invoice.

If your facility utilizes electronic test ordering, our Laboratory Information Management System Administrator has contacted your electronic health record (EHR) vendor or local EHR team to ensure the order choices are available for use.

#### What is not changing?

The specimen type or acceptance criteria will remain unchanged for serum and whole blood specimens. Please collect, store, and transport specimens as you currently do.

We hope that the timing of this message gives your facility sufficient time to implement the change. Please contact me with questions at 503-693-4154 or [Vladimir.Yamshchikov@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:Vladimir.Yamshchikov@dhsosha.state.or.us), or the OSPHL Virology Section Microbiologists at 503-693-4100.

Sincerely,

Vladimir Yamshchikov, PhD  
Manager, Virology/Immunology Testing Section

John Fontana, PhD, (HCLD) ABB  
OSPHL Director

Attachments:

How to Order Syphilis Testing with the OSPHL  
OSPHL Syphilis Testing Algorithm

## How to Order Syphilis Testing with the OSPHL

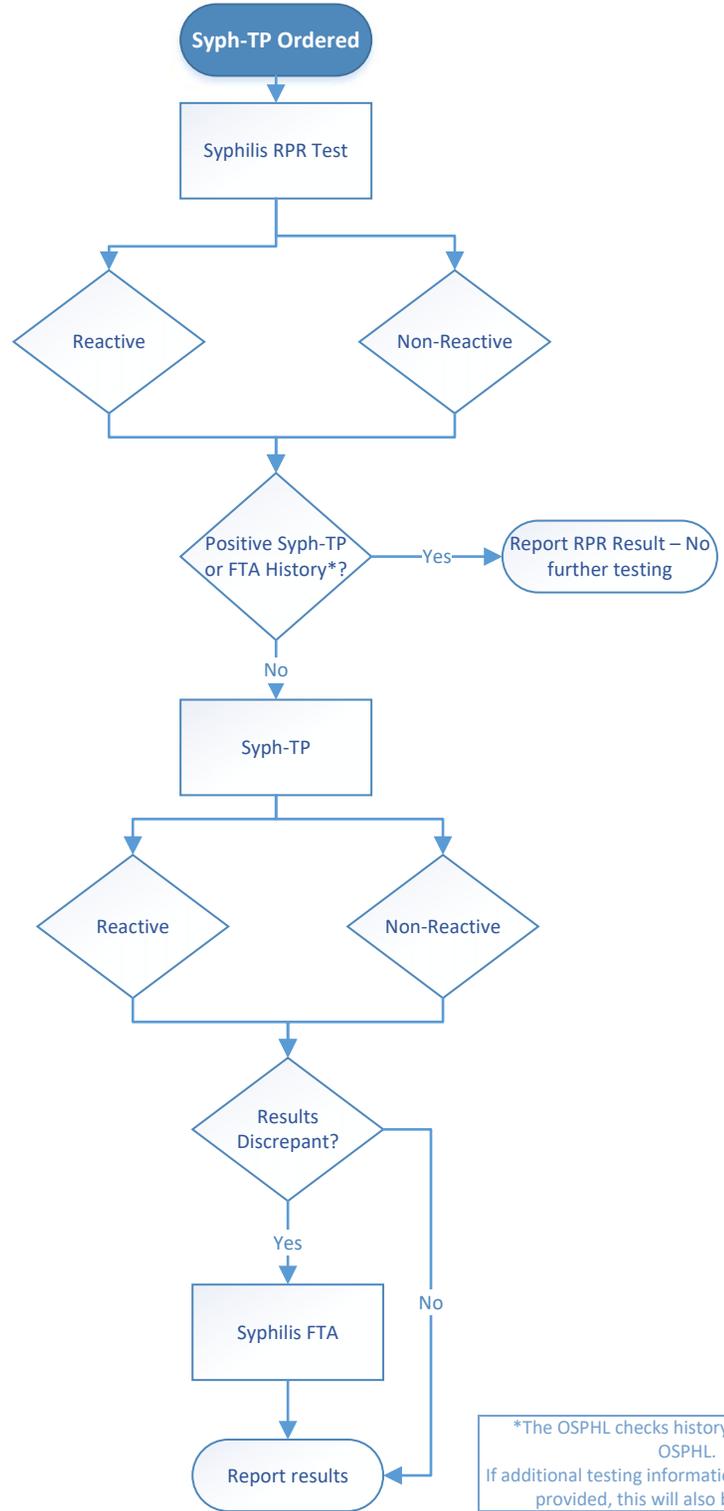
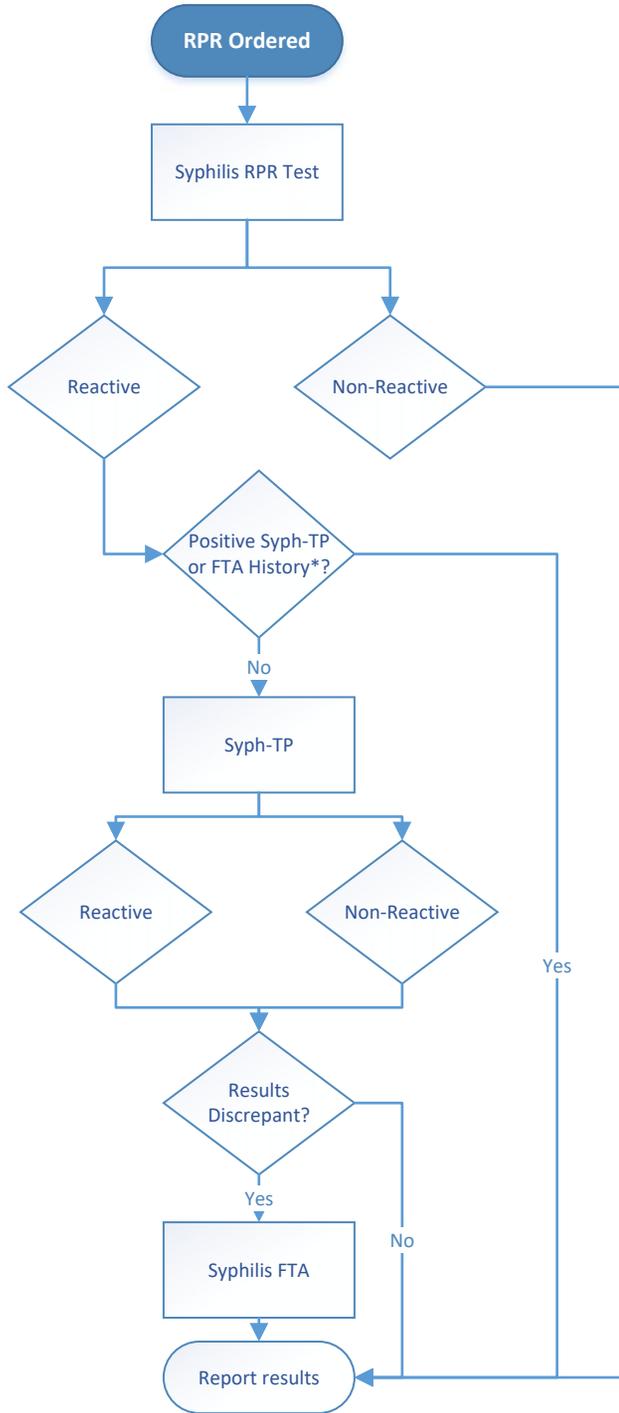
To order RPR only:

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| SYPHILIS                                |                                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RPR | <input type="checkbox"/> FTA-ABS (DS) |

To order RPR and Syph-TP:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| SYPHILIS                                |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RPR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <del>FTA-ABS (DS)</del> <b>Syph-TP</b> |

Oregon State Public Health Laboratory – Syphilis Testing Algorithm (v. 9-4-2018)



\*The OSPHL checks history of testing at the OSPHL. If additional testing information from other labs is provided, this will also be considered.