



Update: NHS England advise gradual return to normal Becton Dickinson container stock

On 29 November NHS England issued its latest update on the Becton Dickinson blood test container supply problem. Previously, NHS England advised that Becton Dickinson containers should only be ordered "little and often", with the aim of practices holding no more than one week's stock at any time. This update suggests that organisations can slowly return to business-as-usual stock levels, but over a period of 6 weeks to avoid additional supply pressures.

The best practice guidance for primary care and secondary care regarding the use of tubes is due to be updated in December. Restrictions placed on testing, will be removed and organisations will be able to return to their previous ordering routes. Those currently using BD US products should continue, but this will be phased out pending further advice.

The NHS England advice for practices issued 17 September, should continue to be followed until the update:

Continue testing activity in primary and community care in line with stocks permitting.

Avoid over-testing,

Check what tests have been conducted recently in another care setting,

Check if the test can be added on to a recent (past days to week) sample,

Review the frequency of tests that are done for monitoring purposes (thyroid, B12 etc),

Reduce non-essential (non-urgent) testing including rescheduling routine health checks and in most cases stop vitamin D testing,

Rotate stock to avoid out of date wastage,

Stop 'double-tube' practice and use a single blood tube for all biochemistry tests,

Avoid an immediate surge in demand for tubes beyond June and July 2021 baseline levels, working through any backlog of tests over a period of at least eight weeks, prioritising as required.