



JOINT COMMISSION JEWELS

NPSG #2: Improve the effectiveness of communication among caregivers

02.03.01: Report critical results of tests and diagnostic procedures on a timely basis.

What is the distinction between “critical tests” and “critical results”?

1. **Critical tests** are specific, defined tests ordered by a physician that are performed and with results reported within the established guidelines regardless of the outcome of the test or procedure.
 2. **Critical results** are results that are beyond the normal variation and require rapid communication because the results may significantly impact morbidity and/or mortality. Critical results apply to such values or findings from diagnostic tests including imaging studies, cardiac studies, laboratory tests and other diagnostic tests identified in the TRMC organizational policy: “Critical Tests, Non-critical Tests with Critical Findings, and Notification of Critical Results”. Critical test results are always communicated by telephone or in person.
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1. Results from critical tests and critical results from non-critical tests will be reported using the following time frames:
 - Fifteen (15) minutes - calling of results from availability by performing department
 - Fifteen (15) minutes - for RN to call MD after receipt of result(s) from performing department.
 - Thirty (30) minutes for MD to respond with action plan.
 2. Notification and Documentation of Results from Critical Tests and Critical Results from Non-Critical Tests:
 - In the inpatient areas and the clinics during normal operating hours, the laboratory and/or diagnostic area will notify the RN responsible for the care of the patient by phone for the result of a critical test or any critical result.
 - The critical result will be written on the “Critical Test Record” label, read back and verified by the RN taking the phone call.
 - The RN will notify the ordering physician of the critical result within 15 minutes of receiving the result of a critical test or critical result from a non-critical test from the diagnostic or procedure department and obtain any necessary orders for intervention or follow-up testing within 30 minutes of reporting it to MD.
 - If the RN is unable to contact the ordering physician he/she will notify the medical resident on call, the primary attending physician or one of the consultants as appropriate.
 - The “Critical Test Result” label is pasted on the “Progress Notes” and will include the following information:
 - The Critical Result
 - The name of the person reporting the result from the laboratory or diagnostic area, date and time result was received
 - Name of the RN who received the critical result
 - Name of physician notified; Date and time physician was called
 - Time call was acknowledged by the physician
 - Action resulting from notification, i.e. “See order sheet”, “No orders”, or “See Nurses Notes”